

# THE LONDON READER

of Literature, Science, Art, and General Information.

[ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.]

No. 1846.—VOL. LXXI.]

FOR THE WEEK ENDING SEPTEMBER 17, 1893.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



CLARICE LAY, A DEAD WEIGHT AGAINST HIS BREAST, MOTIONLESS, UNCONSCIOUS, SHE HAD FAINTED.

## FOR LOVE'S SWEET SAKE.

### CHAPTER I.

#### A VOICE FROM THE PAST.

It was close upon midnight, and the moon was at the full. Her light bathed Sunningdale Court in a broad flood of radiance that hid the many imperfections of its architecture and lent an added charm to its undoubtedly picturesque outline. It was a grey stone battlemented old pile, with square towers at either end, that, from the thickness of their masonry, and the shape of their windows, would seem to have been a survival of the original building. The rest of the mansion was of a later date. These towers were not joined to the main wing, though the one at the western extremity had once been connected with it by a covered gallery. This gallery, however, had crumbled away with the lapse of years, and had been replaced by an oaken beam, of a

little more than a foot in width, placed there, no doubt, for the purpose of supporting the old walls of the tower.

The curious spell of silence which moonbeams seem to weave over a landscape lay upon house and gardens. One window, on the ground floor, was thrown wide open, and in front of it stood the master of the Court, Sir Alrick Chandos, with his only child, Clarice—a girl of nineteen—whose fair, blue-eyed loveliness contrasted strangely with her father's rugged face—a dark, swarthy face, suggestive of strong passions held in control by an iron will.

"Come," he said, playfully shaking her hand from his arm, "it's time you were in bed. No woman should risk the loss of her beauty sleep."

The girl's red lips curved themselves into a delicious pout.

"You want to get rid of me, so that you may hurry off to your horrid books in the Tower! Fancy you advocating 'beauty sleep'—you, who sometimes sit up till the sun rises!"

"I have no beauty to lose, luckily or unluckily,"

he retorted, grimly, "and I have almost learned to do without sleep. But when I was your age it was different; then I—" he stopped abruptly, conscious of a certain wistful questioning in the girl's eyes.

"Why don't you go on, father!" she asked, pressing closer to his side. "I have noticed that whenever you chance to speak of your youth you are quick to pull yourself up, as if you were trespassing on forbidden ground."

"That is exactly what it is, Clarice—*forbidden ground*."

"But why should it be?" she persisted, disregarding the covert warning in his tone. "I should love to hear stories of those days, of the things you said and did when you were a boy, of the adventures you had in your early manhood, and the scenes you took part in before you met my mother, and settled down to the quiet life of a country gentleman."

"If I told you, the story would be neither pleasant nor profitable," he returned, the two upright lines in his brow growing deeper. "My

youth was stormy, and it is better that the waters of oblivion should sweep its records away. Allusions to that bygone time are painful to me even yet—so painful that I must beg you not to refer them. Will you indulge me in this fancy, Clarice?"

"Yes—a hundred times yes!" she exclaimed, with quick repentance. "Nothing in the world would tempt me to say or do anything that I know would give you pain."

He bent and kissed her brow with infinite tenderness. Whatever his faults, however cold and hard he might be to other people, his love for his daughter was deep and true.

Suddenly Clarice lifted her head from his shoulder as the stable-clock began to strike.

"Twelve o'clock!" she said, while the echoes still reverberated on the quiet air. "It is the first of May—May Day! father."

Something in the words, innocent as they appeared, affected him strangely. His dark face grew paler, a sort of hunted look came in his eyes. He drew back a step, and leaned against the oak panelling of the wall, while he passed his hand mechanically across his damp brow.

As it happened, Clarice did not observe this, for she was looking away over the stretches of turf, where the sleeping flowers nodded under their dewy crowns. All beautiful things appealed to her, especially those of nature; and the night was, indeed, a perfect one.

She would have stood thus entranced at its loveliness for another hour, if her father had not spoken to her in peremptory tones.

"Go to bed, Clarice; you will be pale and languid in the morning for want of rest."

She turned quickly and smiled.

"Very well, daddy; but I tell you candidly I would much prefer staying here with you. I don't know how it is, but the full of the moon always excites me, and makes me restless and disinclined for sleep. Besides, it is so delightful to think we two are the only sentient creatures in the house; everybody else is fast asleep."

"Miss Marsh included?"

"Oh, yes! Sybil went to bed a couple of hours ago. She always retires early."

"How do you like her?" he demanded, abruptly. "Is she all your fancy painted when I first told you I was going to get a companion for you?"

A certain restraint appeared in Clarice's manner.

"She is handsome and accomplished, only—well, I don't seem to get any further with her. I dare say it's my fault; but, somehow, I don't think she cares much about me."

Sir Alvick looked at her piercingly, as if he would see whether any hidden meaning lay beneath her words. Then he said, quietly,—

"You and she are not sympathetic. It was an experiment, and it has failed. She told me to-day she wished to leave us in a month's time, so I suppose we must look out for someone else."

A quick exclamation trembled on the young girl's lips, but second thoughts prevented her from uttering it; and almost directly afterwards she withdrew, leaving her father still at the window.

"May Day!" he repeated, below his breath; then he gave a sardonic laugh. "Well, it comes round once every year, and I ought to be pretty well used to it by this. I am a fool to let the recollection trouble me; but memory is a queer thing—a good servant, but an infernally bad master!"

He gave himself a shake and proceeded to close the window, after which he let himself out of a little postern-door, and crossed the flagstones dividing it from the Western Tower. In this tower were still two habitable rooms, both devoted to his use. The lower one he used as a study, the upper as a laboratory.

It was a queer fancy of his thus to cut himself off from the rest of his household. But then, Sir Alvick Chandos was queer—so his neighbours said—queer and unsoberable, caring little for sport or the ordinary pleasures of a country gentleman, and finding his recreation chiefly in abstruse mathematical studies that required solitude for their prosecution.

The study was a fair-sized apartment, with roughly-plastered walls covered with tapestry. Its furniture consisted of book shelves, a couple of chairs, a safe and a writing-table—littered over with papers and various mathematical instruments. In front of this table Sir Alvick seated himself with his back to the door, and presently became so absorbed in his calculations as to lose cognizance of all outward things.

The minutes slipped by; no sound broke the silence save a faint rustling of the young leaves as the midnight breezes swept through them. The world seemed given up to the white spell of the moonbeams, the perfume of dreaming flowers, the quiet loveliness of the drowsy earth. Quite suddenly the spell was broken by the utterance of his name.

"Sir Alvick Chandos!"

The Baronet turned swiftly round in his chair, the compasses with which he had been working dropping from his nerveless fingers. A man stood facing him, his back against the door and his eyes fixed in a steady gaze on the occupant of the chamber. He was tall and sparely built, but there was a suggestion of immense strength in the well-knit frame and firmly-braced muscles, which hinted at an athletic training.

"Who are you, and what is your business here?" demanded the Baronet, hoarsely. It was not often he was taken unawares, but this sudden intrusion on his privacy had certainly unnerved him in no small degree.

The response was given with curious deliberation.

"As to who I am—look, and perhaps you will be able to find out for yourself!"

The stranger threw off the soft felt hat he had worn pressed low down over his brows, and revealed a strikingly handsome face, with dark grey eyes, and a bronzed skin that seemed to owe its tint to exposure to the weather. The lower part of the face was covered by a silky beard and moustache, clipped in the pointed style made familiar by pictures of Charles the First.

Sir Alvick's breath came in short gasps. He seemed for the moment like one stricken with mortal terror.

"Lennox Craven!" he muttered, passing his hand over his eyes as though to clear his vision. "No!" he added, with more energy, and with the air of fighting hard against his own convictions. "It is impossible. Lennox Craven died twenty-one years ago this very night, and the dead cannot rise from their graves."

"Nor can they rest in them when a foul wrong has been left unavenged!" was the stern reply. "It is true Lennox Craven met his death at your hands twenty-one years ago, and it is equally true that I, his son, am here to-night to demand retribution for the crime."

"His son—Craven's son," the Baronet repeated, slowly. "I did not know he had a son, but I cannot question the truth of your statement, young man, for you bear proof of your parentage in your face. Well, it is a contingency for which I was not prepared, but now that it has arisen I must face it." He was rapidly regaining his self-possession; his cheeks were not quite so ashen as they had been, and though his hand as he laid it on the back of his chair trembled, there was tenacity in his grip of the carved oak. "You have taken me at a rather unfair disadvantage. If I had been prepared for your coming I might have received you differently. Do you think it quite the right thing to force your way into a man's private apartment at this time of the night, no matter what your errand may be?"

"I am afraid such questions of etiquette did not trouble me. The barriers of conventionality seem very slight when opposed to a determination like mine. As for taking you unprepared, it would not have suited my purpose to find you within half of half a dozen servants whom you might, with one touch of the bell, have summoned to your assistance. My business was with you, and you alone. A third person would have made it impossible!"

There was an air of finality in the terse dryness of the sentences, which the visitor delivered with a certain impatience, as of one who is anxious to come to the point, and who is delayed

against his will. Sir Alvick knew enough of life to recognize that this was no undecided boy who confronted him, but a man with a stern purpose, which he would inevitably carry out. He moistened his lips before he spoke again.

"And your business—what is it?"

"I have already told you—the avenging of my father's murder. The grand old Mosaic Law is still obeyed where the passions of men have not become enervated by luxury and civilisation—an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. You took a life, Sir Alvick Chandos, and you must pay the penalty of it with your own."

"Good Heavens, do you mean you intend to murder me in cold blood?"

"It will not be murder, it will be justice!" The words were incisive as steel, and there was the glitter of steel in the young man's grey eyes, which indicated inflexible resolution. He still stood against the door, in an apparently careless attitude, but a close observer would have noticed that under the assumed carelessness every sense was alert, and every faculty prepared for an emergency. Perhaps, too, there was a ring of scorn in his tone as he spoke the last words—scorn of what he supposed to be Sir Alvick's display of cowardice.

It stung the Baronet into action. Up to now he had hardly recovered from the effect of his visitor's sudden appearance; but a tremendous effort helped him to brace his faculties to their usual pitch. He drew himself upright, his grasp of the chair loosened; something of his old grim resolution appeared in his eyes—at all events he would prove himself worthy of his antagonist's steel.

"You are pleased to be dramatic, Mr. Lennox Craven—if that be your name," he said, with a sneer; "and you need hardly wonder that I should be filled with surprise at the idea of your father's son claiming for himself the title of avenger. It has not a pleasant sound, you must admit."

The young man's face flushed. For a moment he even winced; but he recovered himself immediately.

"Many realities sound unpleasant when they are put into plain language, but there are certain times when it is necessary to dispense with all ornaments, and call things by their proper names. All the same, I do not admit that the title of 'assassin' fits me. As I said before, I regard myself simply as the instrument by which Heaven's justice may be carried out."

"Then you do not intend to take advantage of my unarmed position, and shoot me here, as I stand?"

"I do not."

"But all the same you intend that I should die?"

"That is so."

"And the means?"

"I will explain them to you."

## CHAPTER II.

### AN HOUR OF PERIL.

Craven, as he spoke, advanced nearer the writing table, and laid upon it two sheathed swords, keeping his hand however, touching their hilts, while his eyes never left the Baronet's face.

"First of all we will go back to the past for a few minutes. I should like briefly to remind you of the circumstances attending my father's death."

Sir Alvick interrupted him with a fierce gesture.

"It is unnecessary—they are written in fire on my brain."

The young man took no notice of the interruption.

"I should like to recall to your recollection that he was young, impulsive, generous, and hot-headed; that he had aided you with money on many occasions, and that you were at the time, hiding in a foreign city, under an assumed name, because you were head over ears in debt, and dared not in consequence return to your native land. On a certain night, you and he were playing cards at a club which was in reality a



gambling hall; he lost heavily—lost indeed all he had, and then, by an accident, discovered that you had other cards under the table, from which you had been playing—in a word that you had cheated."

"It was false!" cried the baronet. "He would never have made the accusation if he had not been mad from his losses."

"False or true, the accusation was made, and so far as my inquiries have helped me to form an opinion, I believe it to be absolutely true. But that is the idle question. You professed to think your honour insulted and challenged him to a duel. He accepted. Seconds were found, and it was arranged the meeting should take place without delay. Accordingly you repaired to a piece of waste ground outside the city, and you fought with swords. At the time you were looked on as one of the best swordsmen in Europe; you had made fencing your hobby, and had spared no pains to perfect yourself in the art, whereas your opponent knew very little about it, and was consequently at your mercy. The seconds thought that you would content yourself with disabling him as you readily might have done, but they thought wrongly. You disarmed him, and then deliberately drove the point of your sword through his lungs, inflicting a mortal wound, from which he died in less than an hour. That, I believe, is a true statement of the case."

"It is a very prejudiced one," exclaimed Sir Alvick, violently. "Your father was, as you say, hot-headed and impulsive. He put upon me a deadly insult, and I avenged it—would any man of honour have done less?"

"We will waive the question of the insult, and confine ourselves wholly to the duel itself. When he was on his death-bed, your own second made a statement to my mother which we can hardly suppose to have been otherwise than true, and he said that my father was not killed in fair fight, but deliberately and maliciously. This is verified by the other second, who broke the news of his death to my mother, and characterised it as murder, pure and simple. But you had made your escape, and moreover it was doubtful whether the law could touch you, so my mother waited, biding her time, until I should be able to take upon myself the office of avenger. That time has come, I, like you in your early youth, have devoted myself to fencing, of which I may now claim to be past-master. I have had matches with the best swordsmen in the world, and have never been beaten. I am not boasting, I simply want you to understand the position exactly, and the power of your antagonist. For, Sir Alvick, I intend that you and I should fight a duel, here in this room, at this moment, and that the duel shall only end with the death of one of the combatants!"

The Baronet understood now, and was sufficiently collected to see at a glance the full meaning of the statement. He looked across at the splendid proportions, and agile strength of the man who challenged him, and his heart sank.

"What chance shall I have against you—you who are in the full power of your manhood, and I, who am going down the hill, and, moreover, have not had a sword or foil in my hands for over twenty years!"

"None," was the candid answer. "And it is just as well you should understand that at the outset. Barring accidents, it is a foregone conclusion that I shall be victorious."

"That you should kill me, in fact!"

"Yes. Put it in that way if you will." Sir Alvick glanced round. Escape was impossible. They two were alone in the tower, of which the walls were so thick that no cries for help would penetrate them. The small slit that did duty for a window was closed, the door was kept by Craven himself, who stood between it and the writing-table. Suddenly the Baronet's eyes rested on the safe, and a gleam of hope shot into them. Even yet, his wife might aid him to salvation.

He turned to Craven with a certain dignity. "Very well, I accept your terms. I see that prayers and entreaties would be useless—the young man smiled slightly—"even if I could humble myself to make them, which I shall not do. But even a condemned man is allowed

certain privileges, and these I claim as a right. For death itself I do not care very much. I have lived my life, and my day is over. But I have a daughter," he paused, and his lip trembled slightly. The weakness, however, was only momentary. "I should like to write a farewell letter to her, and also to give her certain directions as to her own future. That, you will confess, is reasonable."

"Quite reasonable—provided, of course, you make no mention of the way in which you are going to meet your death."

"You need not be afraid of that. I have no desire that Charlie should learn any details respecting my early career. It is a sealed book to her, and I wish it to remain so. All I ask is that you will leave me alone for a few minutes while I write and destroy certain papers. You can stay outside, and guard the door if you like. As you see, there are no other ways of escape from this room."

Craven shot a hasty glance round. No. The window was certainly too small to admit the passage of a man of Sir Alvick's bulk, and fireplace there was none.

"It shall be as you say. Only first of all, you must give me the keys of this writing-table and of the safe."

A look of baffled malice came in the Baronet's eyes.

"But there are papers in the safe that I wish to destroy," he remonstrated.

"Very well, then you can do so in my presence. Only you must permit me to open the safe in the first instance."

"Why, may I ask?"

"Because it is probable you have a weapon there—a revolver, possibly, and you might obtain an unfair advantage over me if you once had it in your hands."

"You are exceptionally cautious," said Sir Alvick, with a bitter sneer.

"It is necessary, under circumstances that are also exceptional," Craven answered, imperturbably.

The bunch of keys with which Sir Alvick had opened his instrument-case lay on the desk at which he had been writing. He flung them over to Craven, and the latter at once proceeded to open the safe. The first thing that met his eye was a small, silver-mounted revolver, beautifully chased, and marked with the Baronet's initials.

"Permit me to take possession of this," he said, slipping it into his pocket; and then, having assured himself that there were no other arms in the safe, and also that the key of the writing-table was on the bunch thrown to him, he took out his watch and looked at it.

"It is now one o'clock all but a few minutes. I will return at a quarter to two, and that will give you ample time for writing. If, however, you should in any way endeavour to take advantage of my clemency, I shall have no hesitation in taking extreme measures—you understand me!"

There was no mistaking the significance of his tone. Sir Alvick nodded sullenly, and watched, with gloomy eyes, his visitor pick up the sword, and, with one last glance round, disappear through the thick oaken door. A grating of the lock, a moment afterwards, told that it was secured from the outside, and that the Baronet was virtually a prisoner.

Having deposited the sword in a corner of the tiny hall or ante-room that gave access to the inner chamber, Craven let himself out into the air, and stood for a few minutes in the deep shadow cast by the tower, looking across at the thick walls of the house itself.

"I wish to heaven the whole thing was over!" he muttered. "It was easy enough to show an impassive front while that villain was by, but it is a horrible business altogether—I would give ten years of my life to back out of it even at this eleventh hour. It is true the man is a murderer, but, after all, the crime was committed twenty-one years ago, and perhaps he has repented. Still, repentance cannot bring back the dead to life, repentance cannot pay for my poor mother's anguish, her spoiled life, her broken heart. No, he deserves the punish-

ment, and it is meet and right that mine should be the hand to inflict it."

He shrugged his shoulders with the air of a fatalist who says, "Kismet. What is to be, will be." For many years—ever since, indeed, he was of an age to think and reason—he had worked steadily up to this hour, encouraged by his mother, who, passionately devoted as she had been to her handsome young husband, had sworn a solemn vow that his death should not be unavenged. At a distance, the consummation of his vengeance, terrible as it was, had presented to Craven no difficulties other than those of time and opportunity—and when the moment really came, both these had served him. Victory was now within his grasp—how could he be expected to relinquish it?

With a stern effort he beat down the scruples that were beginning to assail him, and looked at his watch. A quarter past one—half an hour more before he could rejoin the prisoner in the tower. How slowly the minutes went by!

The moon had sunk lower in the sky, but was still flooding the landscape with silver light, against which the shadows lay blotted like ink. How black was that oaken beam up above his head, which made a bridge between the tower and the house itself! He calculated its distance after the idle fashion of a man who wants to cheat time, and came to the conclusion that it must be between forty and fifty feet above the smooth flagstones on which he was standing. Just above it was a window, long and lancet-shaped, and filled with stained glass, red, azure, and purple. The moonlight played strange freaks with the colours; to Craven, it seemed as if the glass were splashed with blood, some of which had dropped on the beam itself.

While he was looking a strange thing happened. The window, which was a casement one, swung noiselessly back on its hinges, and the figure of a girl stood for a moment in the aperture. She was tall and slight, dressed from head to foot in white, and with a splendour of golden hair falling over her shoulders like a mantle.

Craven stared at her in amazement. Seen, with the moonlight making an aureole round her face, she looked like some delicate and ethereal spirit which had wandered from its proper sphere. An instant later and she had stepped from the window—on to the beam, apparently with the intention of crossing over to the tower.

A low exclamation of horror broke from Craven's lips. He was an athlete himself, used to all kinds of outdoor exercises and perilous feats, but he knew that it required an exceptionally steady head to keep its balance at a height like that, when so slender a barrier was all that intervened between life and death. He held his breath while he watched the girl. To his further surprise he saw that she had bare feet, and something in the way she walked, and in her whole demeanour, inspired him with a sudden idea—which, as it happened, was a true one.

"She is a somnambulist!" he exclaimed, aloud. "In that case she may get across all right—people can do in their sleep what they would fear to attempt waking. But what is her purpose when she reaches the other side? There is no window or opening in the tower by which she could enter it, and she will have no alternative but to turn back. It is then the danger will be greatest."

After stepping on the beam, Charlie—for it was she—advanced with a perfectly free and assured demeanour, which proved that she was totally unaware of any peril threatening her. She never once looked down, and yet her feet were planted quite firmly on the narrow platform that divided her from eternity. The man who watched her, in spite of his great fear on her behalf, found himself admiring the pliant grace of her willowy figure, whose lovely curves were visible beneath the flowing white draperies she wore.

The tension of Craven's interview with Sir Alvick had been great, but it had not tried him as did those few seconds while he looked upwards at the unconscious girl, who was absolutely playing with death. All at once she stopped and uttered a little cry. A nail, sticking out of the beam, had caught her foot, and

turn the delicate flesh, with the result of awakening her. In a moment she saw her danger.

It says much for her presence of mind, that beyond that one little cry no sound escaped her. She stood like a marble statue, white to the lips, frozen with the horror of her awful situation, dumb from sheer inability to articulate.

With the necessity for action Craven's self-control reasserted itself. It was quite clear the girl could neither advance nor retreat, neither was it possible she could long endure the strain of her present position. If she felt it was certain death. His eyes travelled rapidly up the wall of the tower, in the hope of finding some method of scaling it. The great stone blocks, of which it was composed, were crumbling rapidly to their decay, as was also the mortar between them, but the inequalities were not sufficient to afford foothold, even to the most expert climber. Craven looked up at the house itself.

Half way it was covered with ivy; beyond that the walls were smoother than those of the Tower. No hope here, as it seemed—unless, indeed, he could force open a window just below that by which the young girl had made her exit, and entering the house, reach the upper window by means of the staircase—a burglarious proceeding, which nothing but the desperate nature of the case could justify.

Still, he determined to try it. Better try and fall than stand here in horrible inaction, waiting for the inevitable end.

He looked up at the girl, and met her eyes for the first time.

"I am going to save you if I can," he said, in low, incisive tones, that seemed to cut the moonlight silence like a knife. "All you have to do is to keep still. Shut your eyes, and don't open them till I tell you to do so."

Something in his voice compelled obedience. She made no reply, but she did as he commanded.

Then, flinging off hat, coat and shoes, he began his attempt. He did not doubt his ability to reach the lower window, for the ivy almost touched it; all depended on whether he could force his way through. If the fastening was only a slender one, he could break it, but if it were secured from within by an iron bar, his efforts would be useless.

Each moment was now of value. It seemed strange to think that such a short while ago he had wondered what he could do to make the seconds pass more quickly—now he would have given all he possessed to retard their flight.

### CHAPTER III.

#### A MIDNIGHT CRIME.

THE ivy on Sunningdale Court was the growth of more than a century, its branches were tough and thick, and Craven had no difficulty in drawing himself up by their aid. Indeed, until he reached the window, his task was a fairly easy one—or would have been so, if he had not been in such breathless haste, and haunted all the while by the dread of seeing a white-robed figure sweep past him in its fatal downward journey.

The window was in all respects similar to the one above it, except that it was not filled with stained glass. Craven pulled at it with all his might, but it did not yield, then he dashed his clenched fist through one of the small leaded panes, the fragments of glass falling inwards, on the cushioned sill. Through the aperture thus made, he thrust his bleeding hand to reach the fastening, which, after all, proved only to be a simple hasp, that gave way immediately, and made it quite easy for him to swing through.

He found himself in a passage, or gallery, panelled half-way up with oak, above which hung family portraits, dimly revealed by such moonlight as made its way through the window. Needless to say, he bestowed little attention on these pictures, but ran noiselessly along the carpeted gallery, at the end of which he found, as he had expected, the staircase.

Luckily for him the stairs were shallow, and covered with some soft thick pile that deadened his footsteps. He took two or three at a bound,

and, in an incalculably short space of time, found himself at the upper window, looking with anxious eyes to see if the girl were still there.

Yes, thank Heaven! But her figure was no longer rigid as it had been. The strain was growing too much for her; she was trembling visibly; her slim young body awayed to and fro, like a tall lily when the wind shakes it. The question now was whether her fortitude would enable her to retain her position for another few minutes, until he could get to her in fact.

"For Heaven's sake, try and stand still!" he cried, in an agony. "I am here, quite close to you, and I shall be by your side directly, then all danger will be over."

Of course her back was to him as he spoke, so he could not tell by the expression of her features whether she heard or not. His own movements were characterised by a swiftness that showed to think and to act were with him simultaneous. He did not lose a second in deliberation. His plan had been matured as he climbed the ivy, so all he had to do was to carry it out.

Cautiously, but unhesitatingly, he stepped out on the oaken beam just as Clarice had done a few minutes ago.

Never once did he glance downwards, but kept his eyes fixed on the figure a few feet in front of him.

To look into that abyss below would, he knew, be the surest way of unnerving himself.

His athletic training stood him in good stead. Not one man in a thousand could preserve his balance so accurately.

At last he stood so close to the girl that the loose gold of her hair brushed his arm; and then he knew that the crucial moment had come. If she flinched, ever so slightly, when he touched her, it would mean destruction for both.

"I am going to put my arm round you. Keep your eyes shut, and yield yourself entirely to me," he said; and, at the same moment, his left arm clasped her with the firmness of steel. Only just in time. She lay, a dead weight against his breast, motionless, unconscious, she had fainted.

Under the circumstances it was, perhaps, just as well, for though her weight was greater than it otherwise would have been, there was no danger of a movement on her part interfering with Craven's balance. He could not turn, so he had to go backwards, step by step, the heel of one foot touching the toes of the other before he slid it along the beam.

The strain upon him was frightful. Great drops of perspiration stood on his brow; his breath came in panting gasps from between his clenched teeth. But finally he found himself at the window, and then his task was practically over. It was comparatively easy to get in and deposit his beautiful burden on the carpet, where she lay with her hair spread about her like the golden nimbus of a saint.

Craven knelt at her side and looked into her face, wondering what he should do to restore her. A faint fluttering of the eyelids, a slight drift of colour into her cheeks, told him there would be no necessity for his efforts, already consciousness was returning.

When Clarice opened her eyes, she was alone, and the first sound that struck her ear was the stable clock booming out the hour of two. She raised herself on her elbow, and gazed round bewilderedly. The window in front of her was closed, but a ray of moonlight slanting through it, partially illuminated the darkness, and showed a scarlet stain on her bare foot, where the nail had torn it.

Then she remembered everything, and understood the meaning of it all. She had been walking in her sleep.

Of course, she was already aware that she was prone to this habit, especially when the moon was at its full, but it was so long since she had indulged in it that she had hoped and imagined she was cured. The events of the last hour had undeceived her.

She tried her best to think coherently, and to trace the sequence of ideas that had led to her attempt to cross to the Tower, and then she remembered a very vivid dream she had had

immediately after retiring to rest. She pictured her father in deep distress, stretching out his arms to her from his study, and calling her to his aid. No doubt her imagination had been so deeply affected by the dream, that she had risen in her sleep with the intention of obeying his summons. Of the succeeding events, her remembrance was more blurred. A stranger had risked his life to save hers—later on she must try to find out who he was, and express her gratitude.

With some difficulty she managed to rise to her feet, and drag her limbs along the corridor to her room. Once she paused. A sound like a deep sigh floated past her, giving her the impression that someone must be near. But it was too dark to see, and she was too thoroughly un-tinged in mind and body to wish to pursue her investigation further. Once inside her apartment, she threw herself on her bed, and soon fell into the deep slumber of exhaustion.

When she woke, the room was golden with sunshine, and some one was knocking loudly at her door.

In answer to her invitation, there entered a tall dark girl of five or six and twenty, with sombre looking black eyes, and level brows that lent a certain air of Eastern languor to her face, whose effect was heightened by the extreme pallor of her complexion. This was Sybil Marsh, the companion Sir Alvick had provided for his daughter, as soon as her schooldays were over, and her governess had gone.

"Is anything the matter with you, Clarice?" she asked, standing on the threshold. "The breakfast gong sounded half an hour ago, and I have been waiting in the dining-room all by myself, wondering whether, as it was May morning, you and Sir Alvick had wandered off on a long country expedition, from which you would come back laden with wild flowers, after your usual fashion. Then I went outside on the terrace, and saw that your blinds were still down, so I concluded you must have overslept yourself."

"I'm afraid I have—most dreadfully," responded Clarice, rubbing her dimpled knuckles into her eyes, as if "sleeps gentle poppies" were still laying their spell upon her. "I am so sorry to have kept you waiting Sybil, but I'll hurry over my bath, and be down almost directly. Did you say my father had not appeared either?"

"No—and as a rule he is so very punctual."

This was true, the Sunningdale household being indeed a pattern one in this respect. Sir Alvick made a point of never being late for meals, and would not permit unpunctuality in others—as the servants knew to their cost!

His sleeping rooms were in the same wing as his daughter's, and thither Clarice went directly her toilette was completed. The blinds were down, the bed had evidently not been slept in, the Baronet's razors and shaving apparatus were set out in readiness on the dressing-table, everything was scrupulously in order, just as the servant had left it the night before.

"How strange!" the young girl murmured, her brows knitted together in perplexity. "I wonder what has become of daddy. Perhaps," her brow lightened, "he began some mathematical problem in the tower last night, and fell asleep over it. Yes, that must be the explanation. How surprised he'll be when I wake him up!" She ran downstairs, and was met in the hall by Sybil Marsh.

"Is anything the matter with Sir Alvick?" she queried.

"I hope not, but he is not in his room. I am going to the Tower to look for him," Clarice answered. Something in her own words struck her with a sudden fear, and under its influence she looked back over her shoulder as she was leaving the house. "You had better come, too, Sybil."

Outside, on the very spot where Craven had watched Clarice the night before, Simeon, the butler, was now standing. He was an elderly grey-haired man, who had been in his present position for some years, and was devoted to his young mistress, whom he had known from childhood. His face was less rubicund than ordinarily, and there was something unusual in his de-



meantime that instantly challenged Clarice's attention.

"Simcox, have you seen my father this morning?" she asked, quickly.

"No, miss, and it's the first time for fifteen years Sir Alvick has missed the breakfast gong. I thought, may be, he might be in his study there," pointing his thumb over his shoulder, "but the door is locked on the outside, with the key in it, so it don't seem likely anyone can be inside."

"At any rate, we had better see," said the young girl, in peremptory tones that had a ring of her father's imperiousness. But her own face had grown paler, and her fingers trembled as she turned the key, and threw open the door of the small recess that formed an ante-room to the larger chamber within. On the threshold she paused to listen. The silence was like that of the tomb.

"Let me go in first, miss," said Simcox, who had pressed closely after her, and seemed under the influence of some evil presentiment. "Perhaps Sir Alvick is ill, or—"

She shook her head, and entered the study. The sight that met her gaze was one that haunted her for many a long day afterwards.

The strong May sunshine, coming obliquely through the narrow window, shone on masses of paper tossed in confusion over table and floor, on an open safe, and a bronze lamp whose sickly flame showed that the oil was nearly exhausted, and finally on a figure lying prone on the floor, face downwards. Uttering a piercing cry, Clarice darted forward, and fell on her knees beside it, raising the face with trembling hands, and heedless of the fact that where she knelt, a red stain lay on the stone floor. One glance was sufficient to tell her the truth. Sir Alvick Chandos was dead, murdered in the still night watches, on the very threshold of his home, and almost within call of the daughter whose love had been the load-star of his life.

(To be continued.)

## HER LIKENESS.

—101—

"Yes, he does look nice!"

Becky tilted the shutters a little more, and pressed her pretty nose against them, while the morning breeze, thus admitted, stirred her yellow hair and the dark-blue ribbons on her light blue dress.

"And he is as nice as he looks, Rebecca," said Aunt Eliza, standing close behind her niece, in a black cashmere background of ample proportions. "I am critical in the matter of young men; I am by no means easily pleased; but I can say with truth, that Geoffrey Sandford is all that could be desired. He is a thoroughly excellent young man."

Becky strained her blue eyes to study the young man in question. She wondered whether a "thoroughly excellent" young man could be jolly. The phrase was formidable; but Geoffrey Sandford didn't look so.

He was on his lawn, or his father's which adjoined Aunt Eliza's in the act of setting up a tripod of an amateur photographing apparatus. He was tallish, dark eyed, very well dressed, and good-looking.

Becky was decidedly pleased with him, externally. She began to be glad she had accepted Aunt Eliza's invitation for six weeks before going to the seaside.

"When will he call?" she queried, softly, as Aunt Eliza turned towards the door.

"Immediately; probably this evening. Geoffrey is attentive to social requirements," Aunt Eliza rejoined with pride.

Geoffrey—Becky mentally called him Geoffrey—had got his small camera on to the tripod, and was facing it this way and that, stooping often to look through it.

What Becky didn't know about photography would, in cant phrase, have filled a large book; but she was aware that he was trying to fix upon a view.

He looked handsome and debonaire in his blue tourist's jacket, and his straw hat on the back of his head.

Becky stood for a moment in bright-eyed approval. Then she fluttered to the mirror.

Her dress was becoming, and—it would be just as well to have his first impression a good one!

She patted her hair, and straightened her collar, and pulled out a ribbon, and stepped through the low window and sank into the hammock hung between two of the porch pillars. She pulled the folds of her dress into artistic shape with a dexterous twist, and tilted gently to and fro.

Of course she was not turned towards Geoffrey; on the contrary, the back of her head was toward him. But she could see him quite plainly in the glass door through which he had come; it was swung at precisely the right angle.

He did not appear to have seen her; Becky silently admired his good breeding. He went on turning his camera about and ducking down to peer through it.

Then he looked in her direction, and looked steadily for some minutes with his head contemplatively on one side.

Becky's approval melted away. She grew pink and indignant.

How impudent! how horrid! Of course she had been willing that he should see her—she had meant that he should—but to stand and stare like that! If he thought it was funny,—

She was keeping her indignant eyes on the glass door, and she gave a start, and a little, horrified murmur.

Geoffrey was slipping a plate into the camera, and peering through it and adjusting the focus; he was going to photograph her.

She waited, breathless and incredulous.

He couldn't be—not after Aunt Eliza's fulsome praise of him. Why, it would be the roughest thing imaginable, and the most dreadful!

She watched him in agitation.

Yes, he was; the little plate had gone in, and he was pulling something, or snapping something, and turning away, with the camera under his arm. She fancied she had seen the smile of triumphant impudence on his face.

She sat for a moment, with reddened cheeks and beating heart.

"Nice! Did Aunt Eliza call him nice! The horrid, detestable thing! And the worst of it was that he must have known better. Anybody would have known better; and he—well, of course, it was deliberate rudeness. Perhaps he had imagined—Becky's soft lips curled at the thought, while her eyes were angrily tearful—that because she had come from a smaller place than Caston she wouldn't know when she was insulted. He would find out!

She went hastily into the house. If only she hadn't come out, and if only she had gone straight to the country instead of coming to Aunt Eliza's!

Aunt Eliza was standing in the window.

"Geoffrey has been photographing, hasn't he?" she said, placidly. "He is so fond of it! He has so many artistic tastes! Have I shown you the sketch he made of Regy?" (Regy was Aunt Eliza's poodle.) "He works so charmingly in water-colours!"

And Becky, with heroic mercy on Aunt Eliza's smiling complacency, was silent.

At the same moment Geoffrey Sandford, standing in a small room at the back of his house, darkened and lamp-lit, and impregnated with the odour of uncorked "developer," was staring in mute amazement at a newly-developed plate in his hand—not at the vine-coloured porch or the intervening fence, or the sky in the distance, but at the startling unexpected figure of a young lady, in a light dress with dark ribbons, disposed with careless gracefulness in the hammock.

Aunt Eliza's placidity was considerably shaken by the occurrences of the following week and a half.

Geoffrey had called on the first evening of her niece's arrival, as she had proudly expected him

to do, but Becky had had a headache, and had not come downstairs.

He had dropped in the next afternoon, but Becky had not recovered from the effects of her headache, and had not been able to see him.

He had come again the next evening, and Becky had been writing letters, and had called through the door that she must finish them. She was so sorry!

He had called three times since, and Becky had had toothache and a touch of neuralgia, and had been out for a walk on the three respective occasions.

Aunt Eliza was in bewildered despair.

"It has been so unfortunate!" she said to her niece, agitatedly, on the tenth day. "I was so anxious that you should meet Geoffrey. He is so agreeable, such a gentleman, and he would have exerted himself to make it pleasant for you. He has some very fine horses and a row-boat, and he has called six times! And now he tells me that he will leave next week for the seaside for the summer. I have never been more heartily disappointed, Rebecca!"

"Oh, he is going away!" Becky murmured, with a gasp of relief.

The strain of the past few days had begun positively to wear upon her. She had been afraid that she should not be able to elude Geoffrey much longer.

"And—you don't think he'll be back while I'm here?"

"No," Aunt Eliza rejoined, gloomily.

"Oh, thank goodness!" Becky ejaculated beneath her breath, though what she said was, "Dear, dear!" in sympathetic tones.

She felt quite light-hearted. Aunt Eliza wondered vaguely at her sudden buoyancy. She chatted brightly, and rearranged the mantel, and played with the poodle, and started out presently for a walk.

Aunt Eliza looked after her despondently.

Geoffrey would have been certain to like her; and, of course, there was not the faintest doubt that she would have been entirely delighted with Geoffrey.

It was a charming day, and Becky was in good spirits; and Regy, trotting at her heels, seemed willing to go any distance. And they wandered down the street and through a pasture-gate, and over a fence into a small piece of woods; and there Becky uttered a scream of delight, and dropped her parasol, and went down on her knees to devastate a patch of red-and-white lilies.

Regy, obviously pausing at her side, gave a sudden yelp.

A man was coming into sight from among the trees—a ragged man, with a hairy face and a heavy stick.

Regy bidded and snipped; Becky stood up timorously, with the lilies trembling in her hands, and the man came on.

He looked at Becky with an odd, hesitating leer which sent her heart into her throat. She clung to a tree with one fluttering hand, and looked at him with wildly-frightened eyes.

She tried to think calmly, but she could only reflect that she always did get so easily scared, and that she was quite helpless now.

Regy burst into aggravated barking, racing round the interloper in a circle at a safe width.

"What do you want?" Becky gasped inaudibly.

She hoped she was not going to faint, but she was not able to keep off a creeping chill and a shaking of the knees.

"Why, nothin'!"

The man leered with ghastly good-nature. He was quite close to her; he held his stick tightly in one dirty hand, and stood grinning.

Becky's strength forsook her. She uttered a little, terrified shriek; her lilies dropped from her lax hands; a far-off singing in her ears mingled with Regy's bark. She was dimly conscious that somebody was approaching from the direction in which she herself had come—somebody with a wooden box and a closed tripod; but just at that moment the face seemed of no especial importance to her. She sank down at the foot of the tree, a pretty, unconscious heap.

She was by no means certain, mentally, as to who she was, when she came to herself by slow

and unpleasant degrees. She sat on the ground amidst her scattered lilies, her head against the tree, and her hat pushed far to one side. The man with the stick stood in the near distance, still leaning; R-gy was snapping at his heels with unabated fervour; and standing over her, his camera and tripod on the ground, was Geoffrey Sanford. He was fanning her violently with his hat, and his handsome eyes were filled with a keen anxiety.

"You are better, are you not?" he said, in a conventional phrase. "I am Geoffrey Sanford; I hope you are not ill!"

"Oh, no!" said Becky, gathering all her dubious strength to speak firmly.

She stood up with Geoffrey's assistance, and smoothed her dress and straightened her hat, and picked up her parasol.

Her emotions were confusingly varied. She felt, primarily, ashamed of herself. The cause of her terror stood peaceably by, with a friendly, if a senseless leer. She was suddenly conscious that she had not the least occasion for alarm.

Then, of course, she had owed some gratitude—a little—to Geoffrey; but was it consistent with dignity to express it—to him!

She gathered up her lilies in an equivocal salience.

"Well, Sam, better be going on, hadn't you?" said Geoffrey, good-naturedly; and the man with the stick went on his way.

"He's a half-witted fellow, who lives near here, and wanders about the town," Geoffrey explained, helping her with her flowers. "He is harmless, of course; but I can understand your being frightened—he does look formidable."

He shouldered his apparatus and turned back at her side, with Becky in the rear.

There was some embarrassment in the pause that followed.

"Of course," said Becky, twirling her parasol and speaking with dignity, "I am very much obliged for your assistance, Mr. Sanford."

"Do not mention it," Geoffrey rejoined, hastily, taking a branch out of her path. "I am extremely glad to have been of any service; I am delighted that I was on the spot. I spend a good share of my time looking up views hereabouts. There are some rather pretty ones in the neighbourhood."

"You are fond of photography!" said Becky, coldly, and with a double meaning.

"Oh, yes!" Geoffrey rejoined, equably.

"And, by-the-way," he dropped his burden, with a sudden enthusiasm, "such an odd thing occurred the other day. Can you account for it?"

He looked at her smilingly, he drew out his pocket-book, and extended therefrom an unmounted proof of a photograph.

"I think it was my queerest experience in photography, and my pleasantest," he added, gallantly. "I took a view of my next neighbour's garden and porch the other morning, and I am a little short-sighted; and when I developed the plate, I was astonished to find—you! You see," he inserted, apologetically, "I know you by sight, by this time, though I haven't been so fortunate as to meet you till now. If it hadn't been for my near-sightedness, and my knowledge of it, I should have considered it nothing less than a spiritual manifestation. Now wasn't that an episode!"

Becky looked up at him. His fine eyes were fixed on hers in smiling expectancy. The darkest suspicion could have discovered there nothing but the brightest candour.

She studied the small print in flushed silence. It was a short one, but she had time to inwardly apply a great many adjectives to herself—"stupid" and "horrid" being among them.

"Wasn't it odd?" she murmured. "I—I suppose I must have been in the hammock. How well you photograph!"

And they talked on very fast and very enjoyably, and stopped a good many times to gather more flowers, and to take views in which Becky was the principal figure; and took the longest way home, and got there considerably after lunch-time, flushed and laughing, and well on

into the period of banter and nonsense which precedes all legitimate love-making.

Aunt Eliza was delighted, more especially as Geoffrey decided, quite suddenly, not to go to the seaside. And she fairly basked in satisfaction and approval when, after a brief but much improved period, she was informed that Geoffrey had offered himself and all his perfections to Becky, and that Becky had—of course—accepted him.

## NOT BOUGHT WITH GOLD.

### [A NOVELETTE.]

#### CHAPTER I.

##### AN UNWELCOME LETTER.

THE window is thrown wide open to admit the summer air, for the afternoon is intensely hot, and the occupants of the room, into which we introduce the reader, are desirous of taking advantage of the breeze, faint though it be, that occasionally stirs the gracefully-looped and delicately-made lace curtains.

The sun glares down upon the little villa in Dean-street, Park-lane, and were it not for the blinds, the intense brightness of its rays would be almost unpleasant. As it is, it causes the occupants of the room to feel very languid.

They are sitting near the balcony—that is literally covered with flowers, and the air is filled with their pleasant perfume—a matron, and a young girl, who is sitting in a low chair.

She is very fair, as fair as a woman can be without being insipid, and her hair, fastened in a simple coil, is really golden, and would fetch an enormous price were she compelled to part with it. But fortunately for Irena, she is rich as well as beautiful, and looks forward to a happy life without one wish ungratified.

Irena's mother, for such is the relationship between them, has some needlework in her lap, but more as an excuse for idleness than anything else, for she has never put her plump white hands to it all the afternoon.

She is a very handsome lady, but it is evident that she has never been quite so fair as her daughter, whose features would be absolutely perfect were it not for their haughty, defiant expression.

Irena is proud by nature, and her mother had done all in her power to make her haughty and imperious. But Mrs. Sutcliffe could never succeed in making Irena arrogant, for no real lady is that, and the young girl is a perfect lady—there cannot be two opinions about that.

A pleasant picture is Irena, with her head framed as it were against the back of the chair, that is covered with dark blue silk of the richest texture. One white round arm is resting on the side of the chair, and her long curling lashes hide her expressive eyes. And when her lips part to draw in a breath of fresh air, it is with the enjoyment of one who is in perfect health.

Yes, a very pretty picture Irena makes, and so Mrs. Sutcliffe thinks, as she gazes at her from time to time, with a look of motherly affection that is very touching. There is not a happier or healthier girl in all England than Irena, and so Mrs. Sutcliffe tells herself, with a thrill of exultation, for she cannot conceal from herself that she has done all in her power to make her daughter's existence a bright and a happy one.

"Irena," says Mrs. Sutcliffe, at length, meeting her daughter's clear blue eyes as she slowly opens them, "of what are you thinking?"

"Thinking!" cries Irena, with a very low and musical laugh. "What put the idea in your head I was thinking?"

"You were so very quiet, my dear," returns Mrs. Sutcliffe, as she takes up her needlework, and then puts it down again in a most undecided way.

"Quiet!" Of course I am, mother," says Irena, languidly. "I can do nothing else but pant for breath this hot day. As for thinking, that is

quite out of the question. I feel too deliciously lazy to think. Don't you, mother?"

"I am not quite so indolent as you, Irena," declares Mrs. Sutcliffe, smiling at her daughter. "That is if you are telling the truth, for I am certainly persuaded that you have been thinking deeply. Shall I tell you of whom you are thinking?"

"Indeed, mother," says Irena, actually sitting bolt upright in her chair, "I was thinking of no one in the world, only enjoying the summer air, as my little King Charles's terrier is enjoying it over there."

She points as she speaks to a well-kept dog, who is doing a luxurious dance on a rich fringed mat that has been bought especially for his dogship.

A tell-tale blush comes into Irena's face, as it to contradict her words, and she puts her shapely hands before her to conceal it from view. However, her mother's quick loving eyes detect it.

"Ah, Irena, you cannot hide your innocent thoughts from me," she cries. "You are thinking of Lord Raymond. Do you think I have not noticed your growing attachment to each other? I am not blind, you foolish Irena!"

"No, mother, I cannot accuse you of being blind," says Irena. "You really see too much. I do not care anything about Lord Raymond."

"I will not listen to your denials," cries Mrs. Sutcliffe, "and you are very stupid to wish to conceal your feelings from me. Of course, if you loved Lord Raymond, and he did not return your affections, then it would be natural and maidenly for you to hide your love; but you have only to give him a little encouragement, and he will fall at your feet. He worships you."

"Really, mother, I have no desire to have Lord Raymond kneeling at my feet," replies Irena, getting more and more uncomfortably red and hot, and her bosom heaves as though she is panting for breath. "I wish you would talk about something else. Are not those new alabaster statuettes that you bought for the mantelpiece very pretty?"

"No, I'll not change the subject, Irena," says Mrs. Sutcliffe, little knowing the annoyance she is causing her daughter. "I will talk of that which is nearest your heart."

"You do not know who is nearest my heart," thinks Irena, but she is prudent enough to keep this thought to herself. "I might have told you everything if you had only waited, but now I must not divulge my darling secret."

"Lord Raymond is very rich," says Mrs. Sutcliffe, "for his father was almost a miser, and thanks to that he is nearly the richest nobleman in England. Your two fortunes combined will be something enormous."

"Do you wish me to marry Lord Raymond just because he is wealthy?" says Irena. "Have I not enough money already?"

"No; I wish you to marry Lord Raymond because I believe you love him," replies Mrs. Sutcliffe, whilst Irena begins to fan herself.

"Then undeceive yourself, mother," says Irena; "I can never love Lord Raymond, and therefore cannot marry him. I should be wronging both him and myself. Possibly if I were poor things might be different, but as it is I can afford to remain an old maid if I think fit."

"Surely, Irena, you must be joking!" cries Mrs. Sutcliffe, in hurt tones. "You and Lord Raymond have always been on the most pleasant terms."

"Cannot a young girl make herself pleasant to a member of the opposite sex without being in love?" and there is indignation in Irena's voice.

"Then you have been flirting with Lord Raymond," says Mrs. Sutcliffe, severely. "Irena, I am surprised."

"You are not more surprised than I am, when you just now told me that I was in love with Lord Raymond."

"Why did you blush so, then, just now?" asks Mrs. Sutcliffe.

"The exertion of talking brought the colour to my face," replied Irena, opening an ivory fan exquisitely carved.

"You absolutely blushed to the roots of your



half," says Mrs. Sutcliffe. "I say again, you cannot deceive me."

"Now, what good can we possibly do by getting hot and excited?" cried Irena, holding her fan before her face. "Can we not suspend this discussion until a cooler day? Does not the moonlight smile beautiful?"

"There is too much of it to please me," says Mrs. Sutcliffe, in a vexed tone. "You must be serious for once. You are very foolish if you think you can play fast and loose with Lord Raymond. Take my advice, Irena, and don't think that you can do what you like. If you treat him too distantly perhaps he will go from you, and then you will shed tears that will be useless and vain. There are many girls who would like to be Lord Raymond's wife."

"I shall never cry over Lord Raymond," says Irena. "You are only getting most absurdly amusing. I really wish he would marry someone, and then I should not be annoyed by him."

"You must admit that Lord Raymond is handsome."

"He has a noble heart," admits Irena, "and is clever, too, for I read the speech he made last night."

"You take interest enough in him to read his speeches then," says Mrs. Sutcliffe.

"Yes, I like to know what is going on," replies Irena; "besides, I have a great admiration for Lord Raymond; but only as a friend."

"When you go to Lady Roodwood's ball to-night you will dance with Lord Raymond."

"In all probability, if he asks me," says Irena, "for he is the best waltzer I know. I shall be very sorry if he is not there."

"He will be sure to be there," observes Mrs. Sutcliffe, feeling quite sure that Irena is acting with girlish perverseness; "for I told him that you would go to the ball, and in all probability he will send you a bouquet."

"I have flowers enough," says Irena. "He is giving himself trouble for nothing. I have ordered myself a bouquet already, and I am sure mine will be the prettiest."

"Will you promise to wear Lord Raymond's bouquet if it is the prettiest?" asks Mrs. Sutcliffe, eagerly.

"I will make that promise," says Irena, after a moment's hesitation, for some one of whom Mrs. Sutcliffe has never heard is going to send the flowers that she has said she ordered. It is a gross deception, thinks Irena, and she blushes at her own duplicity.

Love must be very wicked, the girl thinks, since it makes one have a secret from one's own mother. She had never had a secret from Mrs. Sutcliffe until she had become acquainted with Gilbert Westmore.

"I feel perfectly sure that Lord Raymond will send you something magnificent," observes Mrs. Sutcliffe. "It is the object of his life to please you."

"It is the object of my life to please myself," replied Irena.

"Please me by consenting to marry Lord Raymond."

"He has not asked me yet."

"But he will shortly."

Irena slowly closes her fan, and is about to make some careless rejoinder when there comes a tap at the door, and a footman enters the room. He carries two bouquets, and a letter for Mrs. Sutcliffe.

"Mine is the best," cried Irena, triumphantly. "The least expensive but the most beautiful. Simplicity is what I like. Lord Raymond's bouquet is too elaborately formal to please me."

Mrs. Sutcliffe does not look up, for she is opening the letter, but she hears what Irena says, and feels annoyed.

"How beautiful these delightful moss-roses smell!" continues Irena, more to herself than to her mother. "I don't like Lord Raymond's taste at all."

If Irena had not had her attention drawn by the flowers, she would have noticed an alarming change in her mother's appearance, for no sooner has she read the letter when her face turns terribly white, and she looks quite ten years older than she had looked a moment before.

The letter is an extraordinary brief one, but Mrs. Sutcliffe fully understands its import. It runs as follows:—

"DEAR MRS. SUTCLIFFE,—

"I dare say you will be surprised to hear that I am in the possession of your secret. I know all. Expect an early visit from yours truly,

"RICHARD REDMAYNE."

"You must confess, mother," cries Irena, excitedly, "you cannot help acknowledging that Lord Raymond is out of the hunt in selecting flowers. Now you shall pick out which you think best, and I'll wear it at the ball. I am sure that you will be in accord with me."

She holds out the flowers as she speaks, one in each hand. Mrs. Sutcliffe tries to look at them, but she cannot do so. A deadly feeling is creeping over her; a mist has come before her eyes. Her head swims.

"Why, mother!" cries Irena in alarm, "what can be the matter?"

"I am ill—faint," replies Mrs. Sutcliffe, in a hollow voice. "The heat of the day is too much for me. I can hardly speak; my sight has quite gone for a moment; lead me to a chair."

Irena throws down the flowers upon the floor, and almost crushes them under her feet, in her anxiety to assist her mother. She had been petted and spoiled, and is dreadfully self-willed, but she loves her mother dearly; the anxious look that has come into those great blue eyes shows that clearly. The rich, healthful, glowing colour flies from her cheek.

"Mother!" says Irena, kneeling beside her mother's chair, after she has led her to a seat. "I hope there is no bad news in that letter? If so, let me share your trouble with you. I have never known sorrow, but I will be brave. Only let me share it with you."

"It is not the letter—no, not the letter!"

says Mrs. Sutcliffe, crushing it up in her hand; "but the heat, the terrible heat! Open the window, dear."

"The window is already opened," says Irena, really frightened, for Mrs. Sutcliffe speaks and behaves so strangely.

"Ah! I quite forgot that!" cries Mrs. Sutcliffe, and she actually smiles, but it is such a ghastly smile that Irena almost shivers. "Quick, Irena! a glass of water—wine—anything, to arouse me from this growing faintness."

Irena hastens to do her mother's bidding, and when she returns the letter is no longer in Mrs. Sutcliffe's hand. While Irena's back has been turned she has concealed it in her dress.

"I am better now," says Mrs. Sutcliffe, after drinking the water, but she neither looks nor speaks as if she were really better. Evidently she wishes to reassure Irena.

"Mother!" cries Irena, passionately, "you are concealing something from me. It is unkind and cruel!"

Irena suddenly stops herself, for her conscience reproaches her. She, too, has a secret that she has not told her mother. Irena's beautiful face wears a troubled expression. A moment before and the world had seemed bright and gorgeous. Now all is changed, for she feels that some mystery is hanging over them, possibly some great calamity. A tangible, open trouble Irena feels herself brave enough to face; but there is something in the unknown that makes Irena feel sad and distressed.

"You really must not think that the contents of the letter has been the cause of my illness," says Mrs. Sutcliffe; "I was feeling unwell before its arrival. I never was able to bear hot weather. The heat is quite oppressive; I am sure there will be a thunderstorm!"

"I will stop at home with you instead of going to the ball!" cries Irena.

"No, no, Irena," says Mrs. Sutcliffe. "I will not be so selfish to keep you away from the ball. It will be quite the grandest affair of the season!"

"Do you think me such a butterfly that I cannot do without pleasure even for one night?" asks Irena in glad tones, for she sees the colour is returning to her mother's face.

"I will go and lie down until dinner-time,"

says Mrs. Sutcliffe. "If I am not well enough to get up again then, come to my room and show yourself in your ball-dress. I am sure it will become you splendidly!"

"You were never too unwell to think of me!" cries Irena, gratefully, as she kisses her mother's cheek.

"I am more determined than ever that you shall marry Lord Raymond!" says Mrs. Sutcliffe, and then she passes through the door, leaving Irena standing in the middle of the room, the picture of surprise.

## CHAPTER II.

### GOLDEN MOMENTS.

"WHO is that beautiful woman in the green dress?" asks Captain Lestrang, a dashing young officer in the Guards, indicating the person he meant.

"Why, do you not know?" replies the person addressed, in tones that express the greatest surprise. "I thought every one was acquainted with Irena Sutcliffe!"

"I have not that honour," says Captain Lestrang, looking with admiring eyes at the graceful girl as she stands beside a sparkling fountain, that she fancies renders the heat of ball less oppressive. "Can you introduce us, Arthur?"

"You are like all the rest of us, Lestrang," says Arthur Despard, laughingly. "Irena seems to cast a spell over every one who sees her. She looks unusually beautiful to-night!"

"That is no answer to my question," cries Captain Lestrang, leaning against one of the marble columns that support the balcony on which the band is playing.

"What question?" asks Arthur Despard, quickly.

"It is no use you putting on that innocent look; I am not deceived by it," says Captain Lestrang. "If you won't introduce me to this Irena Sutcliffe, why don't you say so?"

"Ah! you wish me to introduce you, old fellow," says Arthur, in reluctant tones.

"Of course I do!" cries Captain Lestrang.

"Come now, Despard, don't be a dog in the manger! Make us acquainted. She is the only girl I care for in the room!"

"The fact is," confesses Despard, "I wish for a dance myself, and if I introduce a handsome fellow like you, what chance can I have?"

The contrast between the two men was very great, and Captain Lestrang gives an amused smile as he glances towards a mirror in which their two figures are reflected. Captain Lestrang is slight and tall—so slight that most people would not give him credit for the strength and endurance he possesses. Arthur Despard is short and somewhat stout, and has a pleasing though by no means handsome face.

"Well, as you refuse to do me such a slight favour, I must go and search out someone that will be more obliging," says Captain Lestrang. "I have made up my mind to dance with Irena Sutcliffe to-night."

"Don't be too sure, or you may be disappointed," replies Despard, with a provoking smile; at least Captain Lestrang thinks it provoking, for he is a vain man, and does not like to be told that a girl would refuse to dance with him. He is fully impressed with the idea that he is the handsomest man in the room.

"Why should I be disappointed?" asks Captain Lestrang, with a lazy look at the young dancer.

"Because, in all probability, Lord Raymond will cut you out," says Arthur. "They are seen very often together lately, and there is a rumour going about that they will soon be engaged. But one hears so many of these rumours, and they more often than not turn out false."

"It would be a good chance for her if she were to wed Lord Raymond," remarks Captain Lestrang, lowering his head in order to conceal his face from his friend; a dark shadow had come into it, for he had a great dislike to his lordship.

"Irena Sutcliffe is not a desirable girl," re-

plies Arthur Despard. "She would only give her hand where she could give her heart."

"My dear Despard," says Captain Lestrange, in somewhat sneering tones, "you must have a simple, trusting nature, if at twenty-six years of age you can still believe in a woman's disinterestedness and sincerity. Mark my word, they are all the same—vain, giddy, and deceitful!"

"They are what men make them," returns the more generous Arthur. "Come now, if you think so badly of Miss Irena, why do you want to be introduced to her?"

"I wish to pass the time," says Captain Lestrange. "And when I come to a ball, it is always my desire to dance with the most beautiful woman in the room. I cannot understand how ugly women have the audacity to parade themselves in a ball room."

"Or ugly men, like me!" cries Arthur, with a good-natured laugh.

Captain Lestrange seems somewhat embarrassed by this remark, for he makes no reply, but he takes Arthur by the arm, and leads him in Irena's direction.

She is still standing by the fountain with a look of expectation on her face, when the two men stop before her.

"Allow me to introduce you to Captain Lestrange," says Arthur Despard, and soon the three are talking gaily.

The girl has read of some of Captain Lestrange's exploits in the late campaign in Egypt, and tells him so, and he is greatly flattered.

"Those newspaper fellows exaggerate things a great deal," observes Captain Lestrange, with assumed indifference.

But Irena is too sharp a girl to be at all taken in by this assumption of carelessness, for she sees clearly enough, although he is a brave soldier, he is an insufferably conceited man.

To a certain extent Irena is amused with Captain Lestrange; for he can talk very well, and has seen a great deal of the world, and it is impossible for her not to admire his manly beauty.

"Will you favour me with the next dance, Miss Sutcliffe?" says Captain Lestrange, not having the least doubt what the result will be. She may demur at first, but ultimately he feels quite sure, she will allow him to lead her out.

"I am sorry to have to refuse you, Captain Lestrange," observes the girl, looking quietly round the room. And there is a told-you-so look on Despard's face that quite annoys the gallant captain.

"It will be a great disappointment to me if you don't consent," pleads Captain Lestrange. His voice is low and pleading, his eyes are fixed upon her with an expression of entreaty.

"I am already engaged for this dance," says Irena, frankly. "Come, now, Captain Lestrange, you are not quite so disappointed as you say! There are plenty of nice girls in the room."

"But none so beautiful as you!" almost whispers the Captain, but not low enough to prevent Arthur Despard from overhearing his remark, and he cannot help thinking that his friend is very audacious, for he has only known Irena ten minutes at the most.

"I see that you are just as much at home in a ball-room as on the battlefield!" replies Irena, with a mocking laugh. "Go and flatter some other girl, who will be foolish enough to credit all you say."

"How very suspicious you are, Miss Sutcliffe!" remarks Captain Lestrange, feeling more inclined to frown than smile. He is, however, too much of a man of the world to betray himself into a rude exhibition of his temper.

"I am not suspicious—only frank," says Irena. "You had better be looking for a partner, Captain Lestrange, or you'll be too late."

"Perhaps your partner will be too late," suggests Captain Lestrange. "In that case, Miss Sutcliffe, may I hope?"

"Lord Raymond will not forget me," observes Irena, in confident tones.

"But if it should happen that Lord Raymond

does not appear in time!" says Captain Lestrange.

"Then I will dance with you."

As Irena's words fall upon Captain Lestrange's eager ear, he turns to Arthur with a smile of triumph, which the girl is not slow to detect. She regrets having made any compact with Captain Lestrange, and waits with ill-concealed impatience for Lord Raymond. She will never forgive him, she thinks, if he were to put such a slight upon her. In her eyes it would be an unpardonable sin for a gentleman to ask her to dance and then suddenly disappear. How fervently she hopes that he will appear before the band commences to play, for she is anxious to show Captain Lestrange that Lord Raymond would think twice before neglecting her.

Another minute passes, and Captain Lestrange and Irena are about to leave the sparkling fountain when Lord Raymond suddenly appears upon the scene. The sight of Lord Raymond is as welcome to Irena as it is disagreeable to Captain Lestrange.

The look that Captain Lestrange gives Lord Raymond is full of the most intense dislike. Irena sees the look, and cannot mistake. It is evident to her that Captain Lestrange hates Lord Raymond. But why? Irena is not one of those vain, foolish girls, who are ready to believe every flattering word that a man utters; if she had been one of those, she would have deceived herself into the belief that the look of malice that had come into Captain Lestrange's face had been called there through jealousy and for love of her.

Irena thinks that there must be much graver reasons for such an exhibition of utter loathing, and comes to the natural conclusion that Captain Lestrange has a long-standing grudge against Lord Raymond. But how had Lord Raymond offended him? Irena is quite sure that Captain Lestrange is the person who is in the wrong. She is perfectly certain that Lord Raymond would not intentionally offend anyone.

"You and Captain Lestrange have met before," says Irena, as she walks away with Lord Raymond.

"Very often," replies Raymond, carelessly.

"Often enough for you both to dislike and distrust each other!" remarks Irena, looking up earnestly at Lord Raymond.

"What has put such a strange idea in your head, Miss Irena?" asks Lord Raymond, gazing anxiously at the young girl.

"Because Captain Lestrange gave you such a malicious glance," says Irena, after a moment's hesitation. "You must have observed it yourself, it was so unmistakable."

"You are much more observant than I am," cries Lord Raymond. "I daresay Captain Lestrange was annoyed that I came and took you away."

There is no more time for speaking, for the dance commences, and Irena even quite forgets that there is such a person as Captain Lestrange in existence.

Very frequently during the waltz Captain Lestrange's eyes follow the slight figure in the sea-green dress with a reluctant admiration, for he is intensely angry with Irena, and would fain despise her if he could.

"You see you have failed, as I told you you would," says Arthur Despard, who, notwithstanding his good nature, cannot help enjoying his friend's discomfiture. "It's no use you thinking that you can win every woman's heart, handsome as you are."

"I will bring her low for this!" replies Captain Lestrange. And at this moment Irena passes close to where he is standing. "Do you see how happy and smiling she is now? But I will make that smiling face wet with tears! She is a born coquette, and I will punish her as such women deserve to be punished!"

"Don't talk nonsense, Lestrange," says Arthur. "You know very well that you cannot do what you say. She is nearly engaged to Lord Raymond, and it is not likely that she would allow herself to fall in love with you."

"I will win her love yet," says Captain Lestrange; and then he adds, vindictively, "and

when I have won it I will trample it under foot!"

"Why, how spiteful you are!" says Arthur Despard, in surprise. "I think it will be my duty to warn her against you. Why should you be angry with the girl because she would not dance with you when she had promised herself to another person already?"

"It was the way she did it," replies Captain Lestrange. "Look how she is leaning her head on Lord Raymond's shoulder! I wonder she does that in a crowded room."

"In all probability the waltz is making her a little giddy," says Arthur; and then he adds, mischievously, "Do not Irena Sutcliffe and Lord Raymond make a handsome couple! How happy they both look!"

"Their happiness shall not be for long!" cries Captain Lestrange. "I have a long-standing grudge against Lord Raymond, and now I will try to foil him in the most darling wish of his life!"

"Have you been drinking, Lestrange?" asks Arthur Despard, looking at his friend in the greatest surprise.

"Drinking!" says Captain Lestrange, "you ought to know me better than that!"

"If I did not think it impossible for you to injure Lord Raymond I should certainly warn him," observes Arthur, sorry to find that Captain Lestrange is not such a nice fellow as he thought him.

"Lord Raymond would only laugh at you if you were to do that," says Captain Lestrange, defiantly. "Take my advice, Arthur, and never interfere with other people's affairs. If you do you'll only get into trouble."

Arthur Despard is greatly annoyed with his friend, and, as he does not wish to quarrel, walks away to the refreshment-room, leaving Captain Lestrange still gazing at the dancers, or rather at Irena.

The girl has certainly cast a strange spell over Captain Lestrange, and he cannot help acknowledging to himself that she had made more impression upon him than any other woman. Until now he had regarded women as mere playthings, to pass an idle hour with when there is nothing better to do; but now he felt that if Irena would let him he would love her very dearly. She is really the most beautiful woman he has ever seen, although he has travelled in many countries, and seen many beauties.

It must be confessed that there are not many very pretty girls in the ball-room, and consequently the comparison with them seem to heighten her beauty. The merely pretty girls who are present are quite dwarfed by her superior loveliness, and many a female heart beats with impotent rage at the attention she is attracting.

Irena is not at all a conceited girl, but she would not be a real flesh and blood woman if she did not notice, and were not gratified at the general attention she is attracting. She is an exquisite dancer, her movements are the perfect poetry of motion, and she dances with such unconscious ease and inimitable grace. Her eyes are the brightest in the room, her complexion the clearest, her lips the reddest, and her swan-like neck the whitest.

At length the dance comes to an end, all too quickly, Irena thinks, and, leaning on Lord Raymond's arm, she walks towards the conservatory, passing close to where Captain Lestrange is standing. The lively music seems to be still in Irena's ears, although it has died away, and there is a flush on her face that heightens her beauty.

He sees her for a moment, and then she passes from his gaze as she, still clinging to Lord Raymond's arm, enters the conservatory.

"Shall I follow them, shall I listen to all they say?" mutters Captain Lestrange. "But that would be foolish, indeed. I should only be treated to a lot of insipid love-making. No, I'll remain where I am."

So he steps into the ballroom, making up his mind to dance next time for appearance's sake. He goes up at random to the first girl he sees, who has been greatly neglected all the evening, and asks permission to be her partner.



"Oh, certainly," says the young lady, brightening up wonderfully at the chance of having met a handsome partner. In fact, her eyes had been upon him all the evening, and she had wished so devoutly that he would take her out. So by a mere accident Miss Robinson is made happy for the evening.

Meanwhile, Lord Raymond and Irena Sutcliffe have seated themselves on a bench in the snugest and most isolated part of the conservatory, near the door that leads on to the smooth-cut lawn. The breeze that comes stealing through the open door is very pleasant, and they can hear merry laughter outside.

"You seemed to enjoy the waltz immensely," says Lord Raymond, trying to take Irena's hand in his, but she will not let him do so, greatly to his annoyance.

"I am passionately fond of music and of dancing!" cries Irena.

"I thought so," says Lord Raymond, "or you would not dance so well. Do you know you are the best dancer and the most beautiful woman in the room!"

"Do not try to outdo Captain Lestrangle," says Irena, laughingly, as she leans indolently back. She is rather inclined to be indolent at that moment, the dancing having made her both tired and hot.

"Outdo Captain Lestrangle!" cried Lord Raymond, in a puzzled voice.

"In flattery," says Irena, trying to button her glove, and this is Lord Raymond's opportunity.

"Allow me!" he says, eagerly, so eagerly that Irena is quite amused.

"You can make yourself useful if you like," says Irena, holding out her little well-gloved hand.

It is at this moment that a head appears at the open doorway and a man looks in. There is a jealous look on his face, and his eyes flash angrily.

"I have more right to be beside Irena than you have, Lord Raymond," he mutters between his clenched teeth, "seeing that I am engaged to her."

They did not hear his words, and were quite unconscious of his presence. Indeed they have no idea that anyone is near them. Irena is not in love with Raymond, but Raymond is in love with Irena. Nevertheless, it is a delicious moment for them both, and a moment of much rage for the onlooker. He feels inclined to enter the conservatory to make his presence known, but he conquers his desire by a great effort, and remains where he is.

Lord Raymond takes a long time buttoning the glove, an unnecessary long time the onlooker thinks, but at length Irena shows signs of impatience, and the button is fastened.

"Thank you, Lord Raymond," says Irena, with one of her sweetest smiles; "but don't you think you are just a little clumsy?"

"I am afraid I never appear to best advantage when I am with you, Miss Irena," observes Lord Raymond. "Men in love never do."

"Don't you think it would be better if we were to return to the ballroom?" says Irena.

"I myself prefer to be here alone with you," cried Lord Raymond, eagerly. "One cannot say a word in that crowded room for fear of being overheard."

The man at the door flashes hotly and withdraws his head, but only for a minute. He feels conscious that he is acting meanly for the first time in his life, but he cannot help himself. He would be more than human if he could resist such a temptation when all his future happiness depends on the answer that Irena will make to Lord Raymond. Something tells the listener that the nobleman is about to ask Irena to give him her hand in marriage.

False or true—will she be false or true! That is the question that Gilbert Westwood asks himself. He cannot disguise, he cannot conceal from himself if he would, that it is a supreme moment of temptation for Irena.

To be the wife of Lord Raymond is an honour that any girl might be proud of. Will the temptation be too great, or will she be faithful

to her poor but honourable lover! The question that Gilbert asks himself will soon be solved.

"Surely, my Lord Raymond, you have nothing to say to me that you would be afraid of others hearing!" says Irena. She is about to rise as she speaks, but he catches her by the wrist—not roughly, however, far from that.

"Please listen to me for a few moments," says Lord Raymond, so pleading, so earnestly, that Irena's heart is touched with pity, perhaps with remorse too, for it must be confessed that the girl has given him more encouragement than she has need to, seeing that she is an engaged woman.

"I am lost," thinks Gilbert Westwood. "She will consent to marry him. How could he expect a woman to resist the prospects of winning a title."

But the reply Irena makes somewhat reassures Gilbert, and he breathes more freely, and he feels indignant with himself for having doubted her, even for one brief moment. She is as true as she is beautiful, and he can never sufficiently blame himself for his unmanly distrust of one who has ever proved herself to be above suspicion.

"I think I can guess what you are going to say," says Irena, frankly.

"You know, then, that I am going to ask you to be my wife?" cries Lord Raymond. "Oh, Irena, sweet and dearest Irena, may I dare to hope!"

"Lord Raymond," says Irena, and there is both sympathy and pain in her voice. "I can never—never be your wife. I feel all the more pain, all the more sorrow, all the more distress, for I cannot conceal from myself that I have encouraged you to hope when I should have taken care to let you see how impossible it was for me to become your wife."

Irena's answer is, indeed, a terrible revelation to Lord Raymond, who has set his heart upon winning her for his wife. For quite a minute he sits with his head buried in his hands, and when he does speak his voice sounds so strange and hoarse that Irena is quite startled; but he utters not a word of reproach.

"Do not blame yourself, but rather my presumption," says Lord Raymond.

Irena is about to make some reply, when she catches the eye of Gilbert Westwood listening at the door. She is angry and annoyed at seeing Gilbert in such a humiliating position, for a humiliating position she considers it, to find the man whom she deems the soul of honour to be eavesdropping. She has discovered him, but as yet Lord Raymond is ignorant of his presence, and she would not have him know for worlds that all the endearing words he had uttered had been overheard by a third person.

"We can always be friends," says Irena, in a gentle voice, "can we not, Lord Raymond?"

The word friend sounds very cold and formal to poor Lord Raymond, but he will have to be satisfied with it since Irena had told him so.

"Yes, we can always be friends," says Lord Raymond, "unless, unless," he adds, "you will alter your mind. I would wait, oh! so patiently, if you would only hold out some hope for me."

"It would be cruel of me to deceive you," cries Irena, rather impatiently, as women are to lovers who are not loved again. "Unless you promise me not to renew the subject, we cannot even be friends."

"I will never annoy you with my hopeless love again, Miss Irena," declares Lord Raymond. "May I leave you for one moment? I feel ill and upset. A glass of water will bring me to myself. I have, indeed, to-night received a fatal blow."

"Yes, yes! I will excuse you," says Irena, eagerly.

Lord Raymond hurries away, and hardly has he disappeared when Gilbert Westwood enters the conservatory and stands before Irena. Evidently he is not one of those who have been invited to the ball, for he wears an ordinary frock coat.

"Irena, my darling, my own!" he cries, taking her hand in his and pressing it ardently. "How fortunate I am to be your accepted lover. You are the truest girl in the wide world."

"Gilbert," says Irena, reproachfully, and she makes a faint pretence of withdrawing her hand. But he will not release it.

"Well, dearest!" cries Gilbert. "What is the matter? You look as if about to say something unkind."

"I never thought that you were mean before to-night," observes Irena.

"Mean!" says Gilbert Westwood, in hurt tones. "I do not understand you."

"Yes, mean!" persists Irena, and she looks at him with indignant eyes; but there is love as well as indignation in their blue depths. "Yes, is it not mean, is it not contemptible, to listen at doors?"

"To tell you the truth, I felt contemptible when I did it," admits Gilbert, with a comical look; and the girl is obliged to smile, in spite of herself.

"Then why did you do it?" she asks.

"I could not help myself," returns Gilbert Westwood, taking the seat beside Irena that Lord Raymond had just vacated. "I happened to look through that door, and when I heard Lord Raymond's voice, and saw how lovingly he looked at you, I thought that it was all over with me; but I found that my dear, brave-hearted girl was as true as steel!"

He draws her closer towards him as he speaks, and kisses her, after a falut—a very faint—resistance.

"But how did you happen to be here, you ridiculous fellow!" says Irena, who is full of feminine curiosity.

"As I could not get an invitation to the ball," says Gilbert, "I made up my mind to see you in the grounds, so I just got a friend to lend me his back, and got into the park."

"Then you are a trespasser!" cries Irena, in dismay. "You are very foolish, Gilbert, to place yourself and me in such an awkward position! If you are caught, what excuse can you make?"

"I'm hanged if I know!" returns Gilbert Westwood. "They can't do anything but turn me out!"

"They might give you in charge of the police," says Irena. "Hush, hush!" wringing her hands in terror, "here is someone coming! I do believe it is Lord Raymond! What is to be done!"

"I will conceal myself behind these plants!" cries Gilbert Westwood. "Be more calm, more collected, or Lord Raymond will suspect that there is a screw loose somewhere!"

Hardly had Gilbert concealed himself behind the bushes when Captain Lestrangle comes slowly into view.

"Miss Sutcliffe—all alone!" he says, in assumed surprise. "Do you know that you have lost such a beautiful gallop? You must be just a trifle dull here."

"I came here because it was cool and quiet," replies Irena, rising; "but I think I'll return to the ball-room now."

"Perhaps I have disturbed you," says the Captain, politely; "if so, I will leave you."

"No, you have not disturbed me," replies Irena, in some agitation, for she is greatly afraid that the Captain will catch sight of Gilbert, for the foolish fellow has not properly concealed himself, and has actually coughed once.

"May I hope, Miss Sutcliffe, that I shall be more successful in this, my second attempt, to win you as my partner?" says Captain Lestrangle. "If you are not bound to anyone else, will you dance with me?"

"Yes, yes!" says Irena, eagerly—so eagerly that the vain Captain is flattered. "I will be most happy to dance with you. Come, come! or we shall be too late!"

When Lord Raymond returns to the conservatory he finds that Irena has quitted it, and goes into the ball-room in search of her, to see her dancing with Captain Lestrangle.

"I see now why Irena has refused me," mutters Lord Raymond, with a sigh. "What wonder is there that she should refuse me when I have a rival as handsome and as brave as Captain Lestrangle!"

## CHAPTER III.

## HIS FIRST APPEARANCE.

It is very late before Irena Sutcliffe retires—in fact, broad daylight—and of natural consequence the young lady does not feel inclined to make her appearance at breakfast-time; so Mrs. Sutcliffe is compelled to have the meal by herself—nor is she at all sorry for this, for she has much to think of.

She is fully convinced that if Lord Raymond had had the opportunity on the previous night he would ask Irena to be his wife; she wishes that she could be as equally certain of the girl's answer to the proposal. She tells herself that Irena must be mad if she has refused such a splendid chance. If she had another lover Mrs. Sutcliffe might understand her a little better, but as far as the mother knows her daughter is quite heart free.

Mrs. Sutcliffe never dreams that Irena has a secret from her, although she has a secret from Irena.

The poor lady looks very worn and pale, and is in the most anxious state of mind, and can do very little justice to her breakfast.

The sun is shining brightly into the comfortable, well furnished, and luxurious room, and falling on the woman's tired face makes it appear very haggard.

Mrs. Sutcliffe has been very careless in dressing herself this particular morning, and altogether she looks very unwell indeed. The servants notice this strange disregard to her appearance, and talk about it; for Mrs. Sutcliffe is usually so careful of herself.

"Fool that I must have been!" thinks Mrs. Sutcliffe. "Here have I been deceiving myself into the belief that I alone possessed the knowledge of that secret; it is my secret no longer, seeing that Richard Redmayne knows it too. But how much does he know? That is the thing that I must find out, and quickly too, for then I shall be able to tell whether to defy him, or ask mercy at his hands. Rather than ask a favour of such a man as Redmayne I would gladly give up everything; but then I have Irena to consider—beautiful Irena! Whatever wrong I have committed it is for her sake!"

She is still thinking deeply when the servant enters the room to clear away, thinking so intently that the woman is deceived into the belief that her mistress is sleeping. She is still thinking when the clock on the green marble mantelpiece strikes twelve, and at that same moment there comes a ring at the bell. A violent ring it is, and Mrs. Sutcliffe casts an apprehensive look towards the door. Instinct at once tells her the hand that pulled the bell.

It is the hand of Richard Redmayne! Richard Redmayne!—how she hates the name!

She rises from the couch, and advances towards the door with trembling limbs.

The door slowly opens, and the servant announces the dreaded name.

"Show him up," says Mrs. Sutcliffe, in a firm, commanding voice—so firm, so commanding that she is astonished at herself.

Half a moment elapses, and then Richard Redmayne enters the room, hat in hand. He is very humble and cringing before the servants, but when the door closes, when he and the lady of the house are alone, his manner changes. He is rough in speech and manner—almost insolent, in fact.

"I suppose, Mrs. Sutcliffe, you were rather astonished to receive that letter from me!" says Richard, as he seats himself in a comfortable little chair—Irena's own chair—and throws his hat and stick upon the ground.

"Before I answer that question, please to move from that chair," observes Mrs. Sutcliffe, in the calmest voice imaginable. He sees that he has a very clear-headed person to deal with, and feels uncomfortable.

"What harm was I doing in that chair?" he asks angrily; but, nevertheless, he gets into another.

"That fragile bit of furniture was never made for a great, clumsy, heavy fellow like you," says Mrs. Sutcliffe quietly, as she folds her two hands together before her. "It is a matter of pro-

found word to me that it did not give way beneath you; besides, my daughter might possibly object to see you in it, for it is her chair."

"Ah, your daughter! That is the young lady that I have come to talk about," says Richard Redmayne, looking admiringly round the room.

"You are very condescending, Mr. Redmayne," says Mrs. Sutcliffe, with a mocking laugh—a laugh that nettles Richard, and brings the thick, hot blood into his face.

Mrs. Sutcliffe is acting a part. She wishes to put Richard Redmayne out of temper, in order to find out, if possible, how much of her secret he knows. It is evident to her that she is succeeding in making him very angry.

"I did not come here to be brow-beaten," says Richard Redmayne. "And you had better be careful, for it is in my power to crush you as easily as I can crush an eggshell in my hand."

"What did you come here for, then?" asks Mrs. Sutcliffe.

"To come to some arrangement," replies Richard, doggedly.

"An arrangement about what?" asks Mrs. Sutcliffe, meeting Richard's glance somewhat defiantly. "If you would speak more clearly I might understand your meaning. How can I, if inclined, come to an arrangement if you will not explain your meaning?"

"I'll explain myself as clearly as I can," replies Redmayne, perceiving that there is some common sense in what Mrs. Sutcliffe says. He looks at her with some admiration, with the admiration that a person feels for one who has a higher intellect than themselves.

"Thank you!" is all the reply that Mrs. Sutcliffe makes, as she settles herself in a comfortable position to listen. She is sitting in the darkest corner of the room, for she has no desire that he shall see how haggard she is.

"Well, then, Mrs. Sutcliffe," says Richard, speaking very slowly, in order to be the more impressive, "I am possessed of a secret that is valuable to you, and I have a proposal to make that will suit us all."

"Now tell me this wonderful secret," says Mrs. Sutcliffe.

"Well then, I know very well that neither you nor your daughter have a right to the riches you enjoy," cries Richard Redmayne. "I have the power to sweep everything you have in the world away from you, and can leave you both beggars."

Mrs. Sutcliffe sees that Richard knows everything, that it is no use for her to be defiant any longer, for the man holds all the trump cards in his hand.

He is making no idle boast when he declares that he has it in his power to turn them from the house; he is but telling the truth when he declares that a word from him will make them beggars.

Richard Redmayne reads his triumph in the woman's face, and so he takes advantage of his position to grow more insolent.

"Ah, you are humble enough now," says Richard, rising from his chair, and stooping over the unhappy woman. "You can be civil and accommodating enough when you see that I can make you change that rich silk dress for a bundle of rags. Fancy the proud, the haughty Mrs. Sutcliffe coming down so low as to beg her bread! And that is what you will have to do if, you do not come to terms with me."

"What are your terms?"

"I think they will slightly stagger you," says Richard, boastfully.

"Let me know your terms at once," says Mrs. Sutcliffe quietly, "your presence here is hateful to me."

"If you consent to my terms you will see a great deal of me," cries Richard, with a low chuckle, "or else you will see very little of your daughter."

"Richard Redmayne, you will drive me mad," says Mrs. Sutcliffe. "In Heaven's name, let me know your price!"

"Well, then, if you wish for my silence, I must marry your daughter," says Richard Redmayne. "You can easily see the advantage of such an arrangement, for it will be to my interest to hold my tongue."

"You marry my daughter!" cries Mrs. Sutcliffe scornfully; "how dare you make such a proposal?"

"How dare you refuse such a proposal?" says Richard, stamping his heavy foot upon the carpet. "The fact is, Mrs. Sutcliffe, that I have taken a great fancy to your daughter."

"You have never seen her," cries Mrs. Sutcliffe, indignantly.

"Haven't I, though!" cries Richard Redmayne, smilingly. "There's where you make the mistake. Didn't I see her last night dressed in a green silk dress, looking more beautiful than the flowers she carried in her hand? She is the best-looking woman I have ever seen; and when my eyes fell upon her, and when I knew who she was, I made up my mind to marry Irena. The only thing I do not like about her is that she is too proud; but I'll soon teach her better; you may rely upon that."

"My daughter would sooner be a beggar than marry a creature like you!" says Mrs. Sutcliffe, "even if I were inclined to entertain such an idea. Be more reasonable in your demands!"

"That is the only demand I shall make," says Richard, in the tones of a man who has thoroughly made up his mind; and, looking at him, Mrs. Sutcliffe sees determination written on his face.

"My child, my poor child!" she sobs.

"Your poor child!" says Richard, contemptuously. "Any one would think I was going to do her some mortal injury instead of only intending to marry her. Before two months Irena Sutcliffe will be Mrs. Redmayne!"

"Mother!" cries a clear ringing voice, "what in the world does this mean? Is the man mad?"

The man and the woman turned sharply round and confronted Irena, who regards Mr. Richard Redmayne with a half-amused, half-contemptuous smile.

The two had been so engrossed in their discussion that they had not noticed the door open, and Irena standing on the threshold.

"Is the man mad, or has he been drinking?" says Irena, seeing that neither Mrs. Sutcliffe or Richard make any attempt to explain the man's strange words. She stood perfectly still, as though suddenly struck dumb.

"Will neither of you explain?" cries Irena.

And this time her eyes flash angrily, and if it had not been unladylike the girl would have like to give Mr. Richard Redmayne a good shaking.

"Your mother will explain everything, my dear," says Mr. Redmayne, holding his hat in one hand and his stick in the other. And he rushes out of the room, slamming the door after him.

Mrs. Sutcliffe feels that it is the most unhappy moment of her life as she glances down at the floor, quite unable to meet her daughter's gaze.

"Mother," says Irena, "what is the meaning of that man's insolence? Why has he dared to tell you that he intends me to be his future wife? I could laugh at his vulgar audacity, did I not know by his downcast face that something is, indeed, wrong. Is this man's visit connected with the letter you received last night?"

"Yes, Irena! but do not speak in such loud and angry tones," says Mrs. Sutcliffe.

"I cannot help feeling angry at your listening patiently to that insolent, ill-bred fellow," says Irena. "You ought to have rung for the footman, and had him expelled the house."

"You talk too confidently, Irena," says Mrs. Sutcliffe, mechanically arranging some flowers that stood on a small table, in an elegant vase. "If I had said one word to offend that man, if I had ordered the servant to expel him, he would, in his rage, have said something that would have brought about our ruin!"

"Our ruin!" cried Irena, so loudly, that Mrs. Sutcliffe is quite startled, and her trembling hand touching the vase it fell upon the floor, and broke into a thousand fragments.

"Yes, our ruin!" replies Mrs. Sutcliffe, turning round the ring on her finger as some women do when angry. "A word from his lips, Irena, and we are beggars."

It is Irena's turn to become white and look



started now, for Mrs. Sutcliffe speaks in a most serious tone, and the girl sees all too clearly that her mother is telling the truth.

Irena had never in her wildest dreams considered it possible that she would ever be poor, and, consequently, the sudden probability of losing everything is a very bitter revelation for the proud and haughty girl.

Irena, it must be confessed, has given very little thought to the poverty she has seen in the London streets. Not that she is quite selfish, but never knowing what poverty really meant, she had never troubled herself about those who were less fortunate than herself.

The knowledge that they can be stripped of all they possess comes upon her so suddenly, so unexpectedly, that she feels as helpless and as hopeless as a person who is suddenly taken with a stroke of paralysis or some other terrible malady.

It seems to her that the loss of wealth, and luxury, and social position, is a great deal more to be dreaded than death itself. Everyone in the great world must die; death is a necessary part of existence; but it is not at all necessary that everyone should be poor.

Mrs. Sutcliffe goes to the window and pulls down the venetian blind, for she cannot bear to meet Irena's reproachful glance.

"How is it that this man has the power to make us beggars?" asks Irena, with an angry glance at her mother.

"Some day I may tell you everything," says Mrs. Sutcliffe. "But have pity upon me now, Irena," she adds, pleadingly. "It will be a terrible ordeal for me to go through, and I must have time to think the matter over."

"I wish to hear everything now!" cries Irena, with youthful impatience. "There is no time like the present. Mysteries are all very well in novels, but I do not like them in real life. I ask—I demand—that you should treat me fairly in this matter, and not as though I were an inquisitive and troublesome child. Let there be no secret between us, mother."

She stops abruptly, and looks confused, remembering Gilbert Westwood.

"I cannot do what you ask for some time to come," replies Mrs. Sutcliffe. "It would be waste of time for me to tell you that miserable story now. We have something more important than that to decide. What is to be done?"

"I am sure I do not know, mother," says Irena, looking helplessly round the room, and then bursting into tears.

"You have two things to choose from if you wish to avoid being a beggar," observes Mrs. Sutcliffe, who is gradually gaining her composure.

"What are they?"

"You must either marry Lord Raymond or Richard Redmayne!"

"I will not marry either!" declares Irena. "I think it is too bad of you to expect me to make such a sacrifice for you."

"Irena," says Mrs. Sutcliffe, "I am not thinking of myself. If I had only myself to consider I would not hesitate a moment. I would give up all this wealth. But in that case what would become of my darling?"

There was so much love, so much tenderness in Mrs. Sutcliffe's voice, that Irena is touched, and she really feels ashamed of herself for her late exhibition of anger—as well she might be.

"Forgive me, mother," she says, "if I have spoken harshly."

"I have nothing to forgive," replies Mrs. Sutcliffe, kissing her daughter's fair cheek. Then she adds,—

"If you marry Lord Raymond you can defy Richard Redmayne, for you will then be a rich man's wife."

A brief, but a bitter struggle it is for Irena to give up Gilbert Westwood; but the girl comes to the conclusion that there is no other course open to her.

It would be selfish of her, she tells herself, to marry Gilbert, who is a poor and struggling barrister. Her love-dream must end; she must no longer be a romantic girl—she cannot afford to be romantic. She must now become a sensible and practical woman.

"I will marry Lord Raymond," says Irena,

hardly able to control her voice; "that is, if he should ask me to do so again."

"Did Lord Raymond ask you to marry him last night, then?" cries Mrs. Sutcliffe, in delight.

"Yes."

"And you were foolish enough to refuse?"

"I refused him because I did not love him," says Irena, sadly; "but I must not think of love now. I must think of money."

"You must write to Lord Raymond at once, and tell him that you have altered your mind," cries Mrs. Sutcliffe. "There is not a moment to be lost."

"Had I not better wait a day or two?" cries Irena. "He will think it so strange if, after refusing him, I write and tell him I am willing to be his bride."

"Lord Raymond!" a servant announces at this moment.

"I will leave you now," says Mrs. Sutcliffe, significantly, when the servant had gone downstairs to fetch Lord Raymond up. "No doubt you will come to an understanding."

When Lord Raymond enters the room he is surprised to see how pale and unwell Irena looks, and comes to the conclusion that she had overtaxed her strength at the ball of the previous night. She looks up with a sad and yet a winning smile, and the strong man's heart beats so quickly that he finds it difficult to speak.

"Miss Irena," he says, "I have ventured to call to see how you are getting on after the ball. You stopped there very late!"

"Too late, Lord Raymond," returns Irena, as the gentleman takes a chair near her own. "I am very tired, indeed, this morning."

"You look tired," says Lord Raymond, and then he is silent—strangely silent, Irena thinks.

"Lady Clifford gives a garden party," observes Irena, "but I do not think I shall go to it. A quiet drive will do me a great deal more good."

"You ought to go," says Lord Raymond. "Our only general will be there, and you ought to see him, you know."

"Ought I?" asks Irena.

"Of course you ought," replies Lord Raymond.

"Then I will go."

Lord Raymond looks pleased, and Irena is resolved that he shall repeat the question, "Will you be my bride?" before he quits the room. If he has only courage enough to repeat that question his answer will be a very different one to that of yesterday.

"It is the last time you will meet me for a long time to come," says Lord Raymond. "When I say good-bye to you in Lady Clifford's garden I shall go away from England for a great many months."

"Why?"

"You know why."

"I am sure I do not."

"Come, now, Miss Irena, do not be so hypocritical," cries Lord Raymond, expostulatingly. "I am going to leave England because I cannot win your love; because I am resolved not to see you kinder and more considerate to others. Perhaps after you have been married to Captain LeStrange for some time I shall return."

"Married to Captain LeStrange!" says Irena, in surprise. "What could have put such a preposterous idea into your head?"

"I thought that you loved each other!" replies Lord Raymond, and the dark shadow passes from his face.

"You were very wrong to think such a thing," says Irena, warmly. "Why, I had never seen him before I was introduced to him last night."

"What a cur Captain LeStrange must be!" cries Lord Raymond, almost trembling with indignation. "He told me last night that he had known you a year, and insinuated that you were engaged. That is why I resolved to leave England immediately."

"You will not leave England! I tell you how sorry I am," says Irena, blushing to the roots of her hair.

"Sorry for what?"

"Do you remember when you asked me a certain question what my answer was?"

"You said 'no,' most emphatically," says Lord Raymond.

"But all the time I meant 'yes,'" replies Irena.

"My darling! my own!"

He takes her in his strong, loving arms, and kisses her again and again.

## CHAPTER IV.

WHEN Mr. Richard Redmayne again presents himself at the little house in Dean-street he is quite surprised at the cool way in which he is received. He had expected such a different reception, and now he finds, to his dismay, that he has built his hopes on shifting sand. He had quite made up his mind that Mrs. Sutcliffe would yield to the inevitable, and bring her daughter into the same state of mind as herself.

But he had reckoned without Lord Raymond, of whose very existence he was ignorant. Even if there had been no such a person as Lord Raymond it is not probable that Irena would have consented to a marriage with Richard. A girl of any refinement would naturally turn with loathing from such a man.

"I have given you a week to consider the matter," says Mr. Richard, throwing himself upon a chair and looking round the room with an air of proprietorship.

"You are very kind and considerate," observes Mrs. Sutcliffe, politely. It is the politeness of defiance, and Richard begins to feel uncomfortable.

"I'm a rough, plain-spoken man," says Mr. Redmayne, "and don't want any beating about the bush. Will your daughter consent to the proposal I have made?"

"My daughter will not entertain such an absurd proposal," cries Mrs. Sutcliffe, hardly able to keep her temper. "I really wonder how you could have the audacity to make it!"

"If the girl does not marry me I'll blow the whole thing," says Richard, insolently—so insolently that the blood surges to Irena's face, and she feels hardly able to restrain herself from striking him with the riding-whip she holds in her little hand. She is dressed in a habit that shows her superb figure to the greatest advantage.

"Yes," repeats Mr. Richard, looking at Irena with his mean little eyes. "If the girl don't marry me I'll blow the whole thing, and you'll be beggars!"

"Notwithstanding the severity of your penalty we must really refuse the honour, the great honour, you offer us," says Mrs. Sutcliffe. As for Irena, she is too indignant to speak. She cannot help wondering how Mrs. Sutcliffe can keep such great command over herself.

"Do you think that if you possessed all the mines in Mexico that I would consent to marry my daughter to such a person as you? You must be mad, raving mad, or you would not dare to be so insolent!"

"I'll bring your pride down before long," says Richard Redmayne, spitefully.

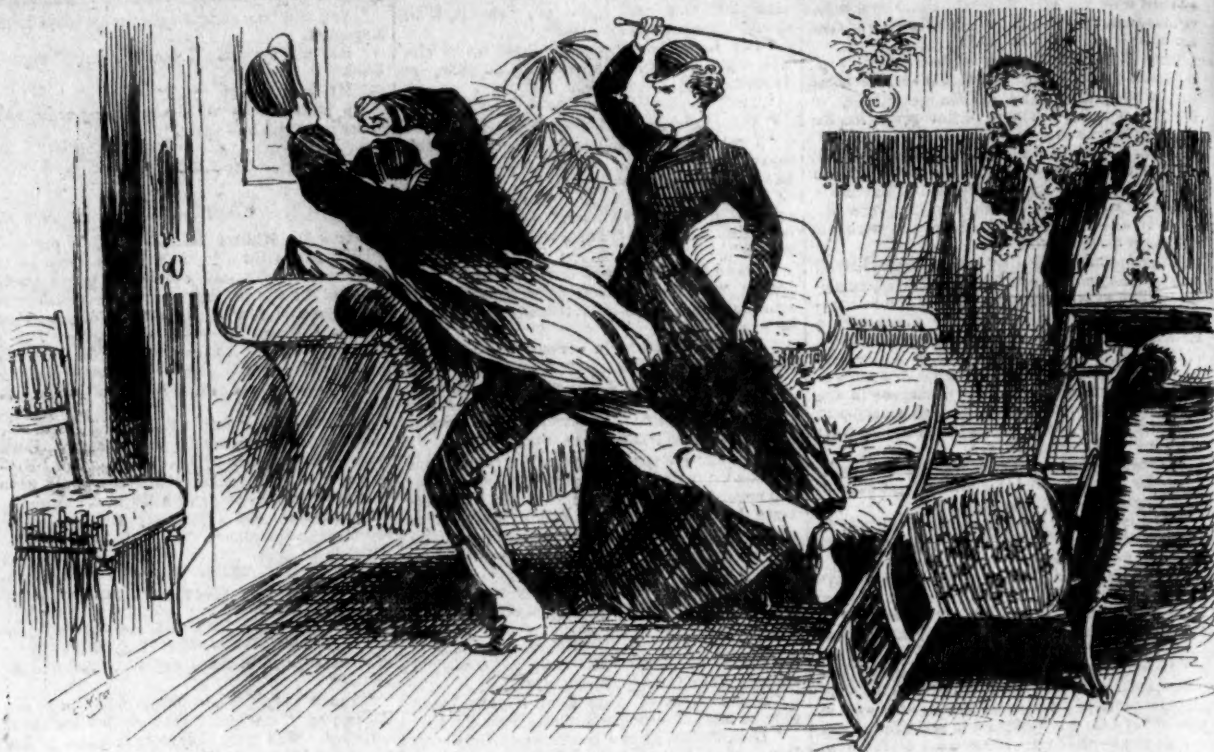
He had risen from his chair, and stands before the proud and beautiful girl.

"You had better go," observes Mrs. Sutcliffe, for she sees that he is working Irena up into a terrible passion. He sees that, too, and reveals in it. Her eyes flash, and her breath comes more quickly, and she grasps the little riding-whip still more tightly in her hand.

"I shall not go before I have spoken, until I have said all I want to say," cries Richard Redmayne. "Look here, my girl, I'll bring down your pride, your disdainful pride. How will such a look and such a manner suit you when you are clothed in rags, and without a shelter!"

"Villain!" gasps Irena, whose face is almost distorted with passion the veins in her forehead gathering in knots.

"It will be the greatest triumph, the greatest joy of my life, to see you reduced to beggary," says Richard Redmayne, hoarsely. Hardly had he spoken when he gives vent to a loud cry of pain.



RICHARD REDMAYNE MEETS WITH HIS DESERTS AT THE HANDS OF IRENA.

Irena had struck him across the face. Mrs. Sutcliffe feels that the punishment is well deserved, but at the same time she cannot help regretting that Irena should give vent to such fierce, resentful passion. The expression of the girl's face seems utterly changed. She looks like a beautiful demon.

"Go!" cries Irena.

The man needs no second bidding; he is frightened for the first time in his life, and of a woman, too. He makes straight for the door with his hands over his head to protect himself from the blows she showers upon him. In her anger she is merciless. She feels that she would like to kill him. He reaches the door and throws it open. Irena makes an attempt to follow him further, but as he descends the stairs her mocking silvery laughter falls upon his ears.

"Oh, Irena! why did you forget yourself!" says Mrs. Sutcliffe, reproachfully.

"When a hound misbehaves himself I use the whip," replies Irena, throwing it down. "His insolence is past all bearing."

Mr. Richard Redmayne's voice is now heard from the foot of the stairs, and he repeats very loud and very threateningly, and so that the servants can hear him,—

"I'll make you suffer for this, both you and your spitfire of a daughter," he cries. "Before a week is over your head you shall be turned out of this house without a farthing in the world. Your daughter, for all her fine ladylike airs, will be compelled to work for her living, and not live on other people's money."

It so happens that at this moment Lord Raymond is admitted into the passage, and he overhears every word. He looks at the man sternly and indignantly, and in surprise, for he has a vivid mark on his face which greatly disfigures it.

"You have evidently made a mistake, and come to the wrong house."

"I have made no mistake, and am in the right house," replies Richard Redmayne, defiantly. "Look what that little cat of an Irena

has given me! She struck me in the face with her riding-whip!"

"And serve you right, too!" says Lord Raymond, seizing him by the collar. "How dare you speak of my future wife in such an insolent way! If you are not careful I will thrash you within an inch of your life!"

"Oh, you are engaged to her!" cries Redmayne, looking at him curiously. "Perhaps you will not be so ready to fulfil your engagement when I tell you she hasn't a penny in the world!"

Richard Redmayne had no time given him to say anything more; for, seizing him in his strong arms, Lord Raymond hurled him through the door. When he rises from the bottom of the steps, feeling much bruised and shaken, he is going to make a rush towards the door, but finds it shut.

Having disposed of Richard Redmayne, Lord Raymond hurries into the presence of the woman he loves and her mother, who look very much alarmed.

Mrs. Sutcliffe makes quite sure that everything is over between Lord Raymond and Irena. He has found out that Irena is a penniless girl. Naturally he will break off the engagement. So she tells herself.

"So that dreadful man has gone away!" says Irena, as Lord Raymond stoops down to kiss her.

"Yes; but I was compelled to assist him out of the house," says Lord Raymond, with a laugh. "Is it true that you gave him that nasty blow across the face with your riding-whip?"

"I struck him, and would do it again!" cries Irena, whose face is still flushed with rage and indignation. "He was most insulting to me."

"Irena, I am glad that you had courage enough to avenge an insult," says Lord Raymond, looking at Irena, proudly.

"Mamma and I are pleased that you came in

time to hear that man threaten us," says Irena, sitting down beside her lover. "He is only telling the truth when he declares that he has it in his power to make us absolutely penniless. It will not do him any good to deprive us of the money, but he will do it out of spite."

"Why is he so spiteful against you?" asks Lord Raymond.

"Because I would not marry him," says Irena.

"Did he dare to suggest that you should marry him?" says Lord Raymond, almost incredulously.

"He said he would keep silent about the matter only on that condition," replies Irena. "But of course I laughed in his face. Now that you find me penniless can you love me still, Ralph?"

"Bother the money," says Lord Raymond.

"All I want is you, dearest!"

#### CHAPTER V.

AFTER shaking his fist at the house occupied by Irena and her mother, much to the astonishment of the passers by, Mr. Richard Redmayne hurries away, muttering something between his teeth.

The first thing he does on reaching Oxford-street is to enter a public-house, and, after calling for a glass of ale, turn his attention to a time-table. He finds that the next train for Gorseborough starts in twenty minutes, and hurrying out jumps into the first cab.

There is no particular reason for his reaching Gorseborough on that particular evening. One or two hours—or one or two days, for the matter of that—will make very little difference. If Richard had been cool he would not have gone about his business in such a slap-dash way.

(Continued on page 343)





JOCELYN STOOD BEFORE HIM WHITE AND STERN, UNEARTHLY AS AN ACCUSING ANGEL; "MURDER WILL OUT!" SHE SAID.

## JOCELYN DE BURGH.

### CHAPTER XXI.

THE TRAP IS SPRUNG.

#### "HUGO DE BURGH!"

Jocelyn was speechless with surprise. The keen yellow shaft of light from the lantern lit up the small tower-room, that was all stone and cold as a grave. Against the old walls Hugo de Burgh's figure was but a dark shadow where he stood behind the light, yet she knew it was he, whom she had thought safe in London. A terror such as she had never known—and lately life had been but a series of terrors—kept the girl dumb.

The man, with his lantern rays fall on her face, saw the exquisite rose colour borne of her long pursuit of him, die on her cheeks, and her steady blue eyes narrow with fright. With a slow smile he set down his lantern.

"My dear Miss Brown," he said, quite naturally, in the slow cynical way her ears dropping made familiar to her, "do you mean to say it is you? I am afraid I have led you a sad wild goose chase."

His amiability was somehow frightful.

"I thought," she stammered, "I thought you were some one else."

"A robber, perhaps!" lightly.

"I—we, did not know you had come home," she said, trying hard to keep her voice from trembling. "But since it is you, and not a thief, I will go back and tell Mrs. de Burgh."

She was moving to the door, but without exactly seeming to bar the way, Mr. de Burgh stood between her and it.

"Pray don't trouble," he said, calmly. "I came back this afternoon, and I think I had better break that fact to my mother myself."

His eyes were on her with a curious surprise in them.

"How did you know me?" he asked, idly.

"I have not had the pleasure of seeing you at Castle de Burgh till to-night. I almost wondered, by the way, if by any chance you avoided me."

"I was not likely to come in your way," she said, coldly, "please let me pass, for Mrs. de Burgh may be frightened."

"One moment!" his tone was suddenly significant. "You have not told me why you followed me up here. Who did you think it was?"

"I didn't know who it was," bravely. "I followed you because your mother heard you moving about and was terrified."

"And you were not! You seem to be a lady of strong nerve, Miss Brown; far more so than your substitute at the Warden School!"

It took all the nerve he mentioned to keep back the start she would have given.

"What do you mean?" she said, mechanically, moistening her white lips. How had he found out, had the real Jane Brown betrayed her?

"Truth for truth," observed Mr. de Burgh, calmly. "Tell me first why you came here."

"I came here by accident, partly!"

Oh, if she only were certain how much he knew! She dared not speak for fear of betraying something of which he was ignorant.

"Did you change places with Miss Jane Brown by accident?" coolly. "I went to see you in the school where Miss Barry had placed you, and found instead of you a small person who looked the image of terrified guilt. But you know all that." Politely drawing an envelope from his pocket he handed it to her, and she saw her own name and the Chester postmark on it. "You see," he said, blandly, "you are not very careful, and your confidant not trustworthy."

The paper fell to the ground from the girl's fingers; the man went on speaking as if he had not seen the despair on her face.

"I should never have thought of your being here if I had not been given that envelope," he continued, lightly; "but when I saw that, and remembered my mother's companion's name was

Brown, it seemed a—coincidence! Now I know it was really—providential!" drawing.

"Why do you say you would never have thought of my being here? You never saw me in your life," she cried, quickly.

"I have seen you often enough." There was a sudden roughness in his manner as though he had taken off a mask, "with Miss Barry."

"Jane Brown never told you where I was," she said, shrewdly. "You stole that address."

He put a hand on her shoulder with a grip that held her like a vice, as though he could no longer control himself, and it pleased him to hurt her.

"There is no use in all this talk," he said, viciously, "I know who you are, and who you think you are. You got here," with shrewd guess work that she took for knowledge, "by some trick of changing places with the girl my mother engaged; now you are here I may tell you that it is just what I should have wished, since for the last two years I have been waiting to put my fingers on you."

"Why! What for?" She knew he told the truth—also, why would Miss Barry have sent her away!

"To tell you," brutally, "that all your fine thoughts of belonging to us, of being a de Burgh, are nonsense! You have no name; you are only my stepbrother's illegitimate child."

"That is not true." Her voice was low, and had a dangerous ring to it. "My mother was married."

"Was she?" asked Hugo de Burgh, coolly. "Where, and when? And what, may I ask, was her maiden name?"

What, indeed! Her daughter, in sickening anguish, did not know.

"Bah!" the man gave her a contemptuous twist with his slight hand that felt like steel on her shrinking shoulder, and let her go so suddenly that she reeled. "You do not know; but I know. And I tell you your stay here has been wasted; you have played into my hands by coming. Why, don't you know, you little fool,

that you were only sent out of Miss Barry's house to get you out of my way."

"Because Miss Barry was afraid of you," she retorted, facing him, in the shaft of lantern light. "But I am not afraid." She was pale and shaking, but he saw that it was not with terror, but rage. "Let me pass," she said, "open that door, and I will go back to Miss Barry, and you shall see whether I am afraid—if I am nameless, and not a de Burgh." She bearded him superbly now. "Why did my existence trouble you? It is you, Mr. de Burgh, who are afraid of me—not I of you! And you have reason to be; I know everything, more than you know yourself. I know why my father was falsely accused, and how his liberty was sworn away for nineteen years. I came here by accident?" she threw back her young head, her eyes blazed like an animal's at bay, her straight figure threatened him—"No! I came here by the hand of Providence, to right a great wrong, and see the wicked punished. And the day comes very near now when you will beg my father and me for mercy."

For one moment his hand shook, till the beam of light from the lantern danced on the stone walls of the tower chamber; the next, he recovered himself, but he cursed her as he spoke.

"Since you know so much, perhaps you know where your father is," he sneered. "And perhaps you do not know that a lunatic is an infant in the eye of the law; a dead body is not more helpless. He can do nothing, nor you. A sentenced criminal can have no new trial, and that is what your father is to-day. You can talk, but you can do nothing. If you moved heaven and earth. Why, you little fool, I can shut you in here, and let you die here! Not a soul could hear you if you screamed your heart out."

His face, evil, malignant as Alicia's came close to hers.

"If you would live," he said, through his teeth, "tell me this and I will let you go. Where is the man you call your father?"

She did not shrink, even by a halfsbreadth, from his murderous eyes.

"Safe!" she cried, standing straight and fair. "Safe. But where, is his business, and not even mine. If you tortured me I would not tell you."

He looked round the bare room, his lips curled up like the wolf's that snarled on the crest of his house.

"I will have your father and you too," he returned, quietly. "We will see who will threaten then."

"There will be no time to threaten, and no need." She stood before him white and stern, unearthy as an accusing angel. With an impulse not her own she raised her hand and pointed to the heaven above her, where the moon that shone through the lancet window was not more pure and strong than her own dauntless spirit.

"Murder will out!" Her voice rang like a bugle, clear and high. "It is not I who threaten, but the will of Heaven. Mills grind slowly, Hugo de Burgh, but they grind small. It is you, not I, who are between the millstones."

Against his will the man wiped the cold sweat from his forehead; fear, deadly fear, was on him, yet the next instant he had put it behind him.

"Heroes, in a tower at midnight," he said, with the jeering smile that Moyra dreaded, "a very suitable stage-setting! I will leave you to indulge in them for an hour or so till I make up my mind what to do with you. Do you know what you are, Miss Brown?" with sudden vicious energy. "You are a spy—the lowest thing on earth! and you are as powerless now as a rat in a trap. Tell me where your father is, and I may let you out of it; otherwise"—he shrugged his shoulders, and laughed as he looked her full in the face—"I must bid you a very good night, Miss—"

"Jocelyn de Burgh!" she cut him short, with the voice, the gesture, of an outraged queen. "And if it were not also your name I should be prouder to bear it."

She made no movement as he swung back the

heavy oak door. It was useless to struggle with him, useless to try to follow him, unless she had something to slip into the hinge of the door and stop his shutting it. She had no notion of a hopeless fight with him, the inevitable end of which would be defeat.

Even the sound of a bolt slipping home on the outside of the door did not move her. It was absurd to think that here in England, in the nineteenth century, he could dare to imprison her till she starved to death or spoke. She laughed to herself at the thought, her blood hot in her from the quarrel, her courage high.

The moonlight came wanly through the lancet windows and showed the stone walls surrounding her. Under her feet the floor was covered with a soft intangible dust. The door was thick. She could hear no sound as Hugo de Burgh went away; and, to keep herself warm, she began to pace up and down the small tower chamber.

Her mind was untroubled, till, on a sudden, there came before her in the moonlight the face of the cripple downstairs.

She saw, with sudden insight, the reason of the elation in those malignant eyes; the sense of the excited reiterated order to follow the supposed thief, Alicia had known quite well that it was Hugo. It had been but a trap, and she had helped to set it.

The girl's brave heart stood still.

A small, huddled heap on the stones, Jocelyn sat as the slow hours went by. With Alicia for a backer, she did not feel so certain that Hugo would not dare to keep her imprisoned. And if he did so dare, there was no one in the whole world who would look for her. Her father would be powerless, even if he knew she had disappeared.

The man she loved was Hugo de Burgh's closest friend, and mistrusted her already.

"He can't do anything. I'm not afraid of him, not the least bit!" she repeated to herself, defiantly; but it was not true, she was afraid.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### THE STORM BREAKS ON MOYRA.

"GILBERT, are you up! Can I come in!"

Miss de Burgh pounded vigorously on the door of her uncle's room, at breakfast-time on the following morning. Gilbert's breakfast-time, not her own, for she had been tired and slept late.

Gilbert de Burgh opened his bedroom-door; just dressed, he was good to see in his rough tweeds and froth linen, a man to like and trust for all the handsome mouth was weak under the brown moustache.

"What's the matter! Has anyone stolen your best doll?" he asked, teasingly; but Moyra took no notice.

"Come to my room!" she caught his arm hard with her slender fingers. "Somehow I've thought lately that granny hears us when we talk in your sitting-room. She quotes what we've said afterwards."

"Nonsense! The walls are thick." But he looked at his niece's pale face and let himself be dragged to her room, which was far enough from Mrs. de Burgh's.

She shut the door behind them, and stood, her hand still on his arm.

"Did you know," she said, slowly, "that father came back yesterday afternoon, and that he and granny dismissed Miss Brown, and that she went off by the early train this morning before anyone was up! Her things are to follow her when she sends an address; they are all packed and waiting."

"It's Hugo's house, Moyra," his brother said, with a curious voice. "He has a right to come and go as he likes; but I wonder why he swooped down on that poor girl."

"I don't know, but it was wicked!" She stamped her foot childishly. "Do you know they sent her away without any money! And she had none, I know. When her old nurse wanted her she hadn't any, and I lent it to her. She gave it back to me when she came home" (could Martha Hewitt have known that her

hard-earned savings were made over to a de Burgh!) "and I saw that she had not another coin but one sovereign, just enough to pay her fare third-class to London."

"You can't be right, Moyra!" Gilbert said, incredulously. "How do you know they didn't pay her?"

"Because granny laughed about it. She said Miss Brown was so angry at being dismissed that she got up early and went away without even the servants knowing, and that she would doubtless regret it when she found herself in London without any wages."

"Then it was Miss Brown's fault," said Gilbert, matter-of-factly. "Don't cry, Moyra, I know you liked her, but she was granny's property; you couldn't expect her to keep her for your sake."

But the pretty childish mouth quivered.

"It's not that, Gilbert," she sat down and regarded him intently. "It's that there's something so queer about the whole thing. I asked granny what she had done and she wouldn't tell me. And why did they send her away like that while I was out? I can't understand it. Only yesterday granny could not live without Miss Brown, and this morning she was laughing to herself when she told me she had gone. She seemed delighted!"

"Did you ask your father about it?"

Moyra began to cry as Gilbert had never thought anyone could cry. Her head went down into her hands, while she shook her from head to foot.

"Don't, dear, don't!" He knelt beside her, stroking the soft brown head that he drew to his shoulder; Gilbert de Burgh, to his mother's disgust, could not see any living thing in pain unmoved. "Never mind, Moyra."

"I—I have to mind," she spoke with a desperate effort at self-control. "I asked him, and he said I doubtless knew best. He—oh! Gilbert, he knew all about my having gone to tea at Hollycross with Miss Brown while Guy was there—I don't know how he found out. He said that Miss Brown was not a fit person to have in the house; and that's not true, I know it isn't!"

"How did he find out, I wonder!" Gilbert said, uneasily, wondering if Hugo also knew about his own visits to Glen Farm.

"I don't know," wretchedly. "But he just sat and stormed at me till I felt too sick to cry, thank goodness! He said I was a disgrace to him with my underhand ways, and that Willie Huntley and I had been playing into each other's hands. He says Willie is never to enter the house again, and he is going to send me to a convent in Paris. I am to stay there till I promise never to see Guy Meredith again."

She clutched him to her with her tear-wet little hands.

"You won't let him send me," she sobbed, "will you?"

"My little girl, he's your father; I can only try to make him hear reason," Gilbert answered, pitifully. "But what set him on you and Guy this morning?"

"I don't know; perhaps he had a letter from him about me. It doesn't matter. Only I am afraid of father. He was so cold-blooded about sending Miss Brown off like that; and he swore at me, Gilbert, and told me to get out of his sight."

"Do it, then," Gilbert was always very practical in small things. "Keep out of his way altogether, and perhaps this convent rubbish will blow over. As for Huntley, Hugo has never liked him since he stuck out that the Moores were on his land and were not to be harried any more about being in league with the distillers. But Hugo won't dare turn him out when he comes over, so don't worry."

"Willie says the distillers are gone now," Moyra sat up and wiped her tear-stained face, that was so wan and dreary for a girl of seventeen.

"Gone! of course they're gone, and their still destroyed. But Hugo got his back up about them, and would like to chase them to China. I beg your pardon, Moyra, I forget sometimes that he's your father!"

"I forget it too, Uncle Gilbert," the girl said,



slowly, using the respectful prefix to his name which she commonly disdained. "You have been father and mother to me this long time, and do I ever hide anything from you? Yet my own father says I am a dishonourable sneak. If I am it is from being treated as if it were my fault that I wasn't a boy."

"We're miserable failures," Moyra, from granny's point of view," Gilbert said, with an attempt at lightness that sat ill on him as he looked uncomfortably at his niece's sad little face. "You go and bathe your eyes and have some breakfast—I'll bet you haven't looked at any—and then just keep out of the way. I'll go and see what all this is about. It may be only one of granny's tempests in a teapot, as far as Miss Brown is concerned. You know how often she sends Matthews away in her rages, and has her back again the next week."

"She can't get Miss Brown back, for she doesn't know her address, and neither do I. And if she does, I'll be gone—to the convent!" Moyra's voice was hard, and her eyes dry. "I wish we hadn't gone to Hollycross last night. I feel too dreadfully about Miss Brown. Just think, Gilbert, what an evening she must have had with granny and father."

"We couldn't have helped her if we had been at home. And she's luckier than we are. She could leave this cursed house," Gilbert muttered, as he left the room. For one of the thorns in his side was that there was no proper provision made for him, his father having died intestate; all his income was an allowance from his mother, perfectly inadequate for his support if he left his free board and lodging at Castle de Burgh, and likely to cease as well. A stronger man would have long ago cut loose from his uncongenial surroundings, but Gilbert lacked the force of mind. Besides, there was Moyra. Gilbert knew quite well that neither his mother nor his brother ever spoke a kind word to the child.

He frowned to himself as he sat down alone in the big dining-room to the breakfast he had, like Moyra, neglected. Castle de Burgh, as a home, left something to be desired; of late there had been a sort of unexplained pall hanging over it; his mother and Hugo always mysteriously conversed, Hugo out and in like a thief in the night, Moyra (and himself probably) watched in her comings and goings. And now this grand flare-up, of which two girls were the creditable victims.

"It's a beastly shame, they might have blown off on me, or Huntley," Gilbert concluded, as he attacked his delayed meal. "But I can't see anything that I can do. It's not my house, nor ever will be, thank Heaven! for I begin to think there's a curse on it."

He looked up with a womanish start as a shadow came between him and the light. His brother, with a half-smoked cigarette in his mouth, was surveying him with an unpleasant, sneering smile.

"You begin to think there's a curse on—what?"

The unlucky Gilbert wondered how much he had said aloud.

"A curse on the house," he returned, crotchily. "You startled me. I didn't know you had come home even, till ten minutes ago, when I saw Moyra reduced to pulp."

"She was in a thorough-going passion when I had the honour of interviewing her," Hugo flicked the ashes from his cigarette perilously near his brother's plate. "I trust she has recovered her temper."

"Look out what you're doing! I don't want to breakfast off cigarette ashes," Gilbert returned, sharply. "You bully the child, no wonder she gets angry. She's in an awful state because you sent away her beloved Miss Brown in such a hurry."

"She'll have to get over it, then," calmly. "Miss Brown was not a person I wanted in my house, and I fail to see how it concerns you, unless she was a friend of yours!" with a peculiar raising of his dark eyebrows.

"I never saw the girl. But it was a high-handed sort of proceeding," Gilbert said, stoutly, "and Moyra says she had nowhere to go."

"That's her look-out," cried Mr. de

Burgh, with a smile that might have been his mother's. "But I wouldn't distress yourself, Miss Brown is probably in safe keeping. As for Moyra," his face changed, he threw the end of his cigarette in the fire as if something about it annoyed him, "I shall send her to the Carmelite Convent, in Paris, till she learns sense and manners. I can't have her making herself the talk of the whole country."

"Some one's been stuffing you!" contemptuously. "No one has ever said a word about the kid. And who's going to take her to Paris?"

"You'll have to! I can't leave while mother is so ill; she is worse this morning."

Gilbert had reason to believe she was cheerful beyond her wont.

"I?" he exclaimed, disgustedly. He pushed away his plate and got up from the table. "Not much! You can do your dirty work yourself, for I'm damned if I will."

For once he had had the better of Hugo. He picked up his cap and gloves in the hall and went out, absently enough. The air was cold and fresh, his lameness a thing of the past, and after a while he found himself stepping out bravely and whistling as he walked. He followed the high-road down to Prestaigne-de-Burgh, and took his way to the station on a sudden impulse. The station-master was sunning himself in the ticket-office window, and Gilbert joined him with a cheery good-day.

"Not much doing these days, eh, Jones?" he said, idly, leaning against the doorpost and taking out his cigar-case. "Have a cigar?"

"You don't give us much to do, Mr. Gilbert, sir," the man said, as he thanked him. "Mr. de Burgh is the only one of you that gives us any custom. He came home by the slow train yesterday too; generally he don't fancy it."

"Come, now, we sent you a pretty young lady this morning," Gilbert returned, laughing. "I hope you didn't let her go on any slow train."

"Young lady! There was no young lady from Castle de Burgh to-day, sir."

"You couldn't have been awake, Jones," provokingly. "Didn't you see a young lady in black taking a ticket for the early train?"

The station-master grinned broadly.

"You will have your joke, Mr. Gilbert," he said, with enjoyment. "Why, there hasn't been a woman took a ticket to-day, let alone a lady! And I know it, for I've been here since six this morning. My boy that sells the tickets is laid up at home with the quinsy."

"Quinsy? that's bad," But Mr. de Burgh's face was so expressive of blank surprise that he turned away to conceal it. "Well, I give in about the lady. If a parcel of mine turns up to-day get it sent out, will you? I shan't be in again. Good-day."

He strolled out of the station with a mind all at sea. The girl had certainly been sent away from Castle de Burgh, and he had been sure Jones would have seen her and remembered to what place she had taken a ticket.

"I never knew Jones lie," he reflected uneasily; "the girl must be in the village somewhere. And that looks fishy, as though Hugo had been right to get rid of her. I think I'll wash my hands of the whole business."

He looked up as a dogcart drew up perilously near his toes.

"Hallo, Huntley! What brings you over here!" he exclaimed, with surprise. "Though I don't see why you shouldn't be here, everyone seems to be doing extraordinary things this morning."

"What kind of things?" Lord Huntley had jumped down and stood beside him, as handsome a man in his long driving-coat and low-peaked cap as stood in all England. "You seem to have the hump, my son! I came over to send a wire; the machine at the Rag's Head station has something wrong with it, and won't work."

He drew Gilbert's arm into his.

"Come and send the wire, and then I'll take you back to lunch with me; I've got to shoot rabbits this afternoon."

"I think I'd better go home," rather grimly. "Your reputation isn't in the best of repair at our house either, and Moyra's in an awful way. Hugo gave her the devil about Mared this

morning, and he says you're no better than she is; that you aided and abetted."

"But he's away!" Lord Huntley pulled his moustache and stared.

"He was, but he ain't now!" retorted Gilbert, with ungrammatical terseness. "He came home while Moyra and I were at your house, and sent my mother's white slave packing, then and there. Moyra is heartbroken about it."

"What!" Lord Huntley's spare, handsome face reddened sharply. "He turned Miss Brown out last night—like that! Why, it ought not to have been done to a dog," bitterly, "and the girl was—a lady."

"Was she? I never saw her. But, by George, I don't know what to think about her! My mother told Moyra that she was in such a rage at being dismissed that she left this morning before the servants were up, and walked down here to the station. But Jones says that no lady left by the early train, or any other, to-day. Hugo says she was not 'on the square,' and I begin to think it looks like it, for where can she have gone? Of course, she must be in the village."

Huntley's arm dropped from Gilbert's, for a moment he did not look at him.

What had Hugo found out? He felt sick for the girl whose secret was heavy on her, and then his own old suspicions of her came over him.

"Get in the cart and we'll talk. Never mind my telegram," he said, furious with himself and Hugo, and doing his best to be loyal to the girl he had loved and never trusted.

"Yet you will judge me," she had said that last time he had seen her. Lord Huntley of Hollycross was doing his best not to judge her now.

(To be continued.)

## NOT BOUGHT WITH GOLD.

—30—

(Continued from page 540.)

How he hates the proud and passionate Irena! And many are the bitter oaths that he utters against her as the livid mark on his face smarts and tingles.

He will have a rich revenge, he tells himself. He will humble her to the very dust! Oh, if he could only see her a homeless wanderer! If he could only one day see her fallen so low that other women would draw away from her in undisguised disgust.

He hates Irena with an intense, a fierce hatred, that he had never felt before for any human creature. And he fears her too!

She shall not remain a moment longer in that little house in Dean-street than he can help. It is gall and wormwood for him to know that Irena is revelling in the comfort of a luxurious home.

"I wonder how the other girl will be?" he mutters to himself. "More easily to be dealt with, I should fancy, for she has not been brought up quite so finely. If I can't come to satisfactory terms with her, I shall still do all I can to injure Irena. If I get nothing out of the matter I'll be revenged!"

The train is a slow one down to Gorseborough—one of those trains that stop at every wayside station; and Richard, who is in a carriage, all by himself, can only bite his fingers impatiently, and gaze out at the green, fresh country with a sour, discontented face. When in the best of tempers, Richard has very little appreciation of the beauties of nature. He is more than usually blind to them now.

They are about fifty miles from London when the train is shunted into a siding at a wayside station, and there they remain for quite ten minutes, when Richard puts his head out of the window, and asks impatiently of the red-faced guard,—

"What they are waiting for?"

"The express," returns the guard, who ceases whistling. "It is rather late to-night."

"The express from where?" asks Richard.  
 "From London."  
 "From London!" snarls Richard. "What a fool I have been. I might have come by it instead of this wretched slow train. How many stations is it before we reach Gorseborough?"  
 "Five more," says the guard, as the express train goes thundering by.

At length the train arrives at Gorseborough, and, as he leaves it, Richard wonders how people could have got on in the good old days of stage coaches.

He is very hungry and thirsty, but he is too impatient to stop for refreshment; and, after improving the way, hurries down the main road at a quick pace.

The day is intensely hot, but he pays no heed to that; the road is very dusty, and the wind is blowing in his face.

A two-mile walk, done in very quick time, considering the heat of the day, brings Richard Redmayne in front of a square, ugly-looking house. The sun is shining on the windows, and its reflection nearly blinds Richard, as he stands looking at the house, with his hand upon the gate.

Will it be wiser for him to enter the garden, or to wait and watch? After some hesitation Richard decides to wait, for if he presents himself at the house he may be the object of more curiosity than he cares for. He has made such a failure in his negotiation with Irena that he resolves to be more careful this time. He will proceed in a more cautious manner, and will not tell everything he knows in a few careless words. Victory must be his—victory and revenge, if he only goes the right way about it!

Eve Sinclair is in a very different position to Irena Sutcliffe," thinks Richard, still gazing at the house, with his hand on the gate; "but their positions will be reversed in a few days. Eve will be the lady then, and Irena the beggar!"

Richard Redmayne soon comes to the conclusion that he can gain nothing by standing looking at the ugly square house, so he decides to make for the nearest inn and take a bed for the night. On inquiring, he finds that the most comfortable place to put up at is across some undulating meadows. The pathway lies between the fields and a pleasant wood, by the side of which runs a trickling brook, and the sound of the water falls pleasantly on the ear. He has just jumped from the second stile, when his ears are startled by a loud cry of pain.

"Oh! Henry, how can you be so cruel!" The cry is followed by these expostulating words,—

"I'll do it again, Eve!" says the boy addressed, "if you try to make me go home. I like being in the wood!"

Richard Redmayne was about to go on his way, taking no notice of the scream, but on the name of Eve being mentioned he suddenly stops, and gazes through a gap in the hedge. A hedge surrounds the wood. He sees a fair-haired girl, who greatly resembles Irena, and close to her is a sullen-looking boy, who shows his teeth savagely.

"It is she—the Eve I am looking for," mutters Richard.

"Come home, Harry," says Eve Sinclair. You know very well that your mother likes us to be home at five o'clock. She will be angry with me—you must come!"

"I shan't! I won't! I'll bite! I'll scratch!" says the little savage, kicking at the girl. "You had better not come near me!"

"As you won't come for kindness I must use force," remarks Eve Sinclair. "You are a nasty little spiteful brute to kick me as you did just now!"

"I'll do it again!" says Henry.

The girl runs quickly forward, and seizes him by the collar of his coat; but Henry pushes her against a blackberry bush, and her arm is scratched right down from elbow to wrist.

"Leave me go!" cries the boy, with a glance of triumph at the girl. "I told you you'd get the worst of it!"

"I'll tell your mother of this," says Eve, half inclined to cry.

"I don't care; mother says you are only a

superior kind of servant," replies the boy, who, unfortunately for him, has a vulgar mother. "She says if you object to a few kicks and pinches you can leave!"

"If I were only strong enough I'd take the law into my own hands," says Eve, dragging the boy towards the gap in the hedge.

Seeing that she is gradually succeeding in drawing him along, he throws himself upon the ground, and begins to kick with his strong-made boots.

"The little demon will do the girl some injury," thinks Richard Redmayne. "I will go to her assistance. It will be a very good introduction."

The idea seems a brilliant one to Richard, and he acts upon it at once. Rushing quickly through the gap in the hedge, he seizes Henry in his strong arms, and shakes him roughly.

"What do you mean by kicking and biting your sister?" cries Richard. "You are a little demon. If you were my son I'd give you such a thrashing that you'd be sore for a week. Ah! you little monster!"

"She isn't my sister; she is only my governess," replies the boy.

He is no longer defiant, for he is afraid of Mr. Redmayne and his formidable stick; but he is very sulky.

"If I had not come you would have murdered this young lady," says Mr. Redmayne. "I really believe that although you are so young you are a very wicked little fellow. Boys have committed murders as young as you."

"Ma says she is not a lady, but a nasty forward thing," observes Henry Lovegrove. "She says it is shameful how Eve goes on with Captain Lestrangle. She did nothing but make eyes at him all dinner-time last Friday."

"Hush! hush! Henry," says Eve, blushing and confused.

"There shall be no more pinching and kicking," cries Richard; "I will see you home, miss."

"I will not give you all that trouble."

"It is no trouble," says Richard, "I feel sure that were I to leave you he would attack you again. I see a lurking demon in his eye."

Eve Sinclair smiles, and gratefully too, for she has so few friends.

Henry Lovegrove sees clearly enough that all further resistance is useless, and resolves to surrender at discretion, but he makes a mental reservation to serve Eve out another time. As they stroll along, side by side, Richard Redmayne ventures to remark that her life cannot be a very happy one. He has seen quite enough to know that the people she lives with must be very disagreeable.

"They are not very kind to me," admits Eve; "but I am poor and friendless girl, and am grateful for shelter and food."

"You would like to be rich?"

The question is so abrupt and strange that Eve looks at Richard Redmayne in unconcealed astonishment.

"I have sometimes thought," says Eve, frankly, "that I should like to be rich; but at other times I have reproached myself for such vague longings, for, after all, there are so many people who are worse off than I am."

"True, true," agrees Richard, "but wealth and independence is something to wish for, Miss Eve Sinclair."

"You know my name!" in surprise.

"Yes, I know your name."

"And yet you have never seen me before!"

"I have never seen you before, Miss Sinclair," says Richard, enjoying the girl's puzzled look.

"And yet I have come all the way from London on purpose to see you."

"Who are you, and why have you come from London to see me?" asks Eve.

"I have come to Gorseborough to tell you that it is in my power to make you rich," says Richard, "that is, if you will agree to what I suggest. Some people, knowing they have no rights to do so, are wrongfully enjoying what rightfully belongs to you."

"If you can do me the service you say I'll do anything you ask," replies Eve; "I would do anything to get away from Gorseborough."

"Will you give me half of your fortune?" asks Richard, eagerly.

"Most willingly."

The girl's face is flushed with excitement as she speaks. The idea of a bright new life fills her with joy. As yet she has seen nothing but sorrow and mortification. Now that will all end.

"In less than a week you will be in possession of your property," says Richard Redmayne, confidently.

The sun is setting and the sky is aglow with quivering red, and a strange, hushed silence reigns over the dark woods and the green meadows. She turns towards him, and her face in the evening light looks very beautiful, but she is too much like Irena to please Richard Redmayne. Looking at him she sees the livid mark on his face for the first time.

"Ah," says Richard, "you see that mark on my face. That blow was given to me by a woman this very day—a very spiteful woman—just as spiteful as the boy you have charge of."

"I hope," cries Eve, looking at him in her surprise, "that you have not mistaken me for some one else. It would be dreadful if, after raising my hopes, I should find that there was some cruel blunder."

"There is no mistake," says Richard, confidently, as he helps her over the stile. The boy is in advance of them. He is hurrying towards some one who is coming down the winding path.

"We will say good-bye now, Miss Sinclair," observes Richard, after walking a few yards farther. "You will meet me here to-morrow afternoon!"

"I will," cries Eve, looking towards the advancing man, who has been just joined by the boy.

They shake hands and part, Richard and Eve, and the girl stands leaning on the stile, looking eagerly at Captain Lestrangle as he comes towards her, holding the boy by the hand.

"Holloa, Eve! how charming you look to-day," says Captain Lestrangle, contemplating the girl. "You are very much like a person I knew in London whom I danced with a few nights ago."

"Indeed!" cries Eve, as they walk along, for she does not wish to be late.

"Yes, she resembled you greatly, or, at least, I fancied so," says Captain Lestrangle. "Ran on, Henry, and say we are coming," turning to the boy. The boy obeys, and the girl and the man are left together.

"I am afraid Mrs. Lovegrove will be angry if I get home long after Henry," says Eve, uneasily. "I will leave you to smoke your cigar and get home, if home it can be called."

"You seem in no end of a hurry to get away from a fellow," remarks Captain Lestrangle, as he slowly and insidiously places his arm round her waist.

Thus they walk along together, Eve not making the slightest effort to release herself. She has learnt to be very fond of Captain Lestrangle, and he is greatly deceiving her. He feels very uncomfortable, it must be confessed, for he has come on a very disagreeable errand.

Fortunately, for Eve's future happiness, she does not tell Captain Lestrangle that she is coming into money. She wishes to make quite sure that it is really so before telling him the good news.

"We have had some very happy hours together," says Captain Lestrangle. "Have we not, Eve?"

"The only happy hours I have ever had," cries the girl, frankly.

"I am glad to hear that, but I am sorry that these happy hours must come to an end," says Captain Lestrangle, looking away from the girl.

"To an end!" cries Eve, drawing herself from him.

"I spoke distinctly, did I not?" asks the Captain, leaning over a little bridge that crosses a stream.

"You speak cruelly," says Eve, and had it not been for the handrail of the little bridge she would have fallen to the ground. She had thought Captain Lestrangle such a noble fellow, and now she finds that he is only noble in outward appearance.



"My words are not intended to be cruel," replies the Captain; "believe me, Eve, that it is best for us to part. You ought not to have taken all I said too seriously. A fellow must amuse himself when in a country place, you know. It is pleasant to whisper love nonsense in a pretty girl's ear, and snatch a kiss from a blushing face."

"Don't I don't!" says Eve, with a hysterical laugh. "Do not remind me of my foolishness. I feel quite ashamed when I think of the kisses I allowed you to take from my lips."

"You can't take them back!" cries Captain LeStrange, so boastfully that Eve begins to hate him.

"I thought you were an honourable gentleman," says Eve, scornfully; "but you have shown yourself in your true colours. I am glad that I have found you out."

"Cease your reproaches," cries Captain LeStrange. "What a fuss you make about a few stolen kisses!"

"I shall go home," says Eve; and she would leave him, but he lays a detaining hand upon her wrist.

"One moment, if you please."

"Release me!"

"Not until you have listened to a few words I am going to say," says Captain LeStrange, in decided tones.

"I suppose I must listen!" cries Eve.

"Well, the fact is, Ev, I have sent you a lot of foolish letters," observes the Captain. "Now I want you to return them. You may keep the presents I gave you, but I want the letters. After I have counted them you shall have ten pounds."

"I will not keep your letters, nor your presents, and you can keep your ten pounds!" cries Eve. "I suppose you wish to get back the letters to prevent me from bringing an action against you for a breach of promise of marriage!"

"You will return them."

"Certainly; why should I keep such unmeaning rubbish?" says Eve. "Now I can go, I suppose!"

"Now you can go!" cries Captain LeStrange, striking a match and lighting a cigar.

"Before I go, I will tell you what you have lost, you most deceitful Captain," says Eve Sinclair, with assumed gaiety. "I am grateful that I did not tell you before I knew your true character that I am about to come into a fortune!"

"A fortune!" cries Captain LeStrange, dropping his cigar in astonishment. "Why, my dear Eve, allow me to congratulate you!"

"Thanks," says Eve.

"Do you know, little Eve," whispers Captain LeStrange in a soft voice, "that I was only joking with you all the time, that I only asked you to return the letters just to see how you would take it?"

"You have deceived me once, you cannot deceive me again," replies the girl, and she disappears in the gathering gloom.

"Eve!" cries Captain LeStrange, but she does not return, but a low, mocking laugh comes back on the summer breeze.

## CHAPTER VI.

### A HEART OF GOLD.

Eve's indifference is, however, only assumed, and when she is alone she cannot help giving way, and having what girls call "a good cry."

It is a sad awakening for the young girl to find out Captain LeStrange is so mean and despicable, but fortunately for her her attachments for him was more fancied than real. It was her first romance, the first ray of rosy sunlight that had entered her life.

Captain LeStrange tries vainly to make Eve alter her mind, for now that there is a prospect of her becoming rich and independent he would be very glad to unite his fortunes with hers; but her eyes are open now, and she returns his letters and presents with a few hastily-written words, telling him to forget the whole affair since it will be flat and unprofitable to remember it.

The Captain begs and implores her to alter her decision, bumbles and humiliates himself in every way! but the girl is resolute, steadfast, determined, and refuses all offers of reconciliation with a dignity that is seldom seen in one so young. But notwithstanding the hopelessness of such a task the Captain is doggedly persevering, and as he is staying in Mrs. Lovegrove's house has many opportunities of annoying her.

But just as life is becoming unendurable to Eve her new-found companion Dick Redmayne, comes to the rescue. He boldly knocks at the front door, and demands to see Eve in a loud, dictatorial voice, and when he does see her tells her that she must come up to London at once.

When Eve makes this fact known to Mrs. Lovegrove that lady becomes very indignant and even abusive. It yet wants a week to make up Eve's quarter, she declares, and unless she remains until that time has expired, she will not give her a farthing unless compelled to by law.

Eve is so anxious to get away that she hardly waits for Mrs. Lovegrove to finish speaking. A quarter of an hour after this stormy interview with Mrs. Lovegrove, Eve leaves the house in Dick Redmayne's company.

It must be confessed that Eve does not feel very proud of her companion, who still has the mark made by Irena's riding-whip on his face; "but he is a necessary evil. When I have paid him for his services I shall have no further need for his services," Eve thinks, as they enter the station.

They arrive in London about midday, and after a hasty meal Richard calls a cab.

"Dean-street, Park-lane," he cries.

"Why are we going there?" asks Eve, nervously.

"We are going to turn the people out of the house that rightfully belongs to you," says Richard, boastfully, but he forgets the old maxim that possession is nine points of the law. If Mrs. Sutcliffe is bold enough to resist he will have some difficulty in carrying out his scheme.

"I hardly like to see people turned out of a property that has been enjoyed by them for many years," says Eve, doubtfully.

"But they know it was rightfully yours," replies Dick.

"Let me know all the history of the case," says Eve, as they dash along in the cab, "and in as few words as possible. Who are the people who are enjoying my money?"

"Your cousin and your aunt."

"I never knew I had a cousin and an aunt living," says Eve, with a start of surprise, perhaps pleasure.

"No, it was your aunt's object to keep you in the dark on that matter," cries Richard, looking at the end of his cigar. "You must know that she is a most cunning, a most designing woman. You shall hear why the money was left to you, Miss Sinclair. Shortly before Mr. Sutcliffe died—that is your aunt's husband—he found out that his wife had met an old sweetheart more than once. She swore it was by accident; he declared that it was by arrangement, and even insinuated that the child—your cousin, Irena—was not his child; so in revenge he willed every farthing to you, and, in order to prevent you coming into the property, Mrs. Sutcliffe paid some one to burn the will. That person was my mother, who took care to keep it. That will is now in my possession," tapping his pocket.

Richard Redmayne has just concluded his story when they stop before the house in Dean-street. Remembering the manner in which he had been received on the last occasion, the servants hesitated about giving him admittance, but he forced his way through them and up the stairs. Without waiting to turn the handle of the door he pushes his shoulder against it, and bursts in the room, greatly to Mrs. Sutcliffe's and Irena's astonishment.

"I have brought her!" he cries, excitedly. "Yesterday you turned me from this house; to-day I am going to have the pleasure of expelling you!"

"Brought whom?" asks Irena, curiously, and in fear.

"Eve Sinclair!"

At this moment the young girl, who has followed Richard upstairs slowly and almost reluctantly enters the room, and Irena sees the very picture of herself.

"Allow me to introduce you to your cousin, Miss Irena," says Richard, mockingly, and the two girls rush forward and embrace.

"I have come here," continues Richard, looking at the two girls in the greatest surprise, "to expose a fraud, and to see that this young lady has her rights."

"If my cousin has more right to this house than we have," says Irena, presently, "we will not attempt in any way to keep her out of her property."

"Let him show his proofs—where are his proofs?" says Eve. "How do I know that what you say is true, Mr. Redmayne?"

"Read that document!" cries Richard Redmayne, handing her the will, but standing so that neither Irena and Mrs. Sutcliffe could get at it.

Slowly and methodically Eve reads every line, and when she has finished reading turns to Redmayne, still holding it in her hand.

"I have no reason to doubt his genuineness, but I think it a most unjust will," says Eve.

"Just, or unjust, that is nothing to you," says Richard Redmayne. "The money is yours!"

"It is a great deal to me," cries Eve, "I will not take the slightest notice of a will made by a suspicious old man in a moment of madness. I will not deprive my aunt and my cousin of their just right!"

With this she tears the will in pieces, while Richard, utterly baffled, looks on in the utmost consternation.

"Noble, generous, girl!" cries Mrs. Sutcliffe. "You have, indeed, returned good for evil. How can I ever thank you enough for this self-sacrifice?"

"You little idiot!" says Richard Redmayne, "you have ruined yourself, and will now have to go back to drudgery!"

"I would go through the greatest privation," cries Eve, "rather than deprive my aunt and my cousin of what rightfully belongs to them!"

"But if you cheat yourself you have no right to cheat me," says Richard Redmayne. "You promised me half your fortune, remember!"

"I have no fortune to give," returns Eve, quietly, "and must for the future live on the bounty of my aunt, who, I feel sure, will give me food and shelter."

Richard Redmayne is so mad with rage, and looks so dangerous, that Mrs. Sutcliffe deems it prudent to ring the bell, and when it is answered, she tells the servant to show the gentleman to the door. He turns upon them one last lingering look of malicious hate, and passes out of the room, and out of their lives.

Eve is the happiest of the three, for she has the satisfaction of knowing that she has done a good action, and in winning the love of her relations she has won more than gold can buy—the love and good will of Irena and her mother.

It must be confessed that Irena cannot help feeling melancholy sometimes when she thinks of the supreme sacrifice Eve has made, but she has one consolation, for the girl seems perfectly happy and contented.

The girls, in appearance and feeling, are like sisters, and it is not long before they have told each other all the principal incidents in their lives; and Irena hears, with surprise, of Captain LeStrange's treachery.

Eve cannot help feeling a great deal of sympathy for Lord Raymond, when she hears how very badly he has been served, for, of course, Irena will now marry her real lover, but she congratulates Irena on winning the love of a man like Gilbert Westwood, whom she soon learns to like as a brother.

It is agreed that in the autumn Irena and Gilbert Westwood will be married. Gilbert is very happy and contented, and is already very successful in his profession, having just appeared in a complicated law case to great advantage.

Mrs. Sutcliffe, too, is happy in a quiet sort of way, but she often tells herself that she does not deserve to be so comfortable.

Nearly every evening Eve and Irene go for a walk in Hyde Park, but on one particular evening Eve goes there alone, for Irene has gone to the theatre with Gilbert Westwood.

She is walking along a narrow path when a handsome gentleman, but a stranger, comes up to her, with a grave yet pleasant smile on his face.

"Good evening," he says, in a pleasant voice. "I am glad, even after all that has passed, that you are looking so bright and happy. I declare that you look as if you are growing younger!"

"You have made some mistake; I do not know you," says Eve, quietly.

She sees that he is a gentleman, that he is labouring under some delusion. He is not the kind of person to speak to a stranger in the street.

"A mistake, Irene; how could I do that?" says the gentleman, looking greatly annoyed, and, raising his hat, he is about to walk away, thinking that the girl wishes to cut his acquaintance.

"Stop! Lord Raymond, one moment!" cries Eve. "You have mistaken me for my cousin Irene!"

When Eve returns home she tells Irene of her little adventure, and Irene laughingly declares that her pretty cousin will perhaps marry his lordship.

Eve blushingly tells her cousin not to be so foolish; but when three months have passed Lord Raymond is her lover, and on the day of Gilbert's marriage there are two brides instead of one.

(THE END.)

## HER FATHER'S SECRETARY.

—30—

### CHAPTER XVII.

THE knowledge of Rupert Dane's change of fortune and his betrothal to Gladys Barton, had been a great shock to Gwendolen Melville.

She had never for one moment imagined it possible that he could think of any other girl, with thoughts of love or marriage, save herself.

How often had he declared to her that unless he won her for his wife, he would go down to his grave unmarried.

He had never visited The Mount since that memorable morning on which she had sent him from her so summarily; but once since then she had seen him driving by with Gladys Barton, and the sight of his devotion to Gladys, and the smile on his fair, handsome face had pierced her to the heart like a dagger-thrust, and then Gwen realised that the love which she had believed dead in her heart had been only sleeping, and had needed just such a stimulus as this to awaken it again into new life.

To Cecil St. John the news of his former rival's good fortune was most unpleasant.

He was shrewd enough to see that Gwen's parents would regret losing him for a prospective son-in-law, now that he had thousands at his command, and as for pretty, piquant Gwen herself, to be sure of her he must urge that their marriage take place at once. Delays are always dangerous.

To this arrangement Gwen demurred.

"A fortnight is too soon, Cecil," she declared. "I have changed my mind. I will not marry you for six months at least."

He found, to his despair, that entreaties were of no avail—the petted little heiress could prove quite stubborn when she chose.

Creditors were now pressing him hard on all sides for money, and the only thing that could save him from utter ruin was his marriage with Gwendolen Melville. Yes, the marriage must take place at once.

The race that he was called abroad suddenly, and wished to take her with him as his bride, failed signally.

"I repeat that I have changed my mind, and shall not marry you for six months to come," she insisted; and from the hour that he became convinced that she meant to carry out this decision, St. John was a changed man.

As a last resort, he applied to Mr. Melville, and after a lengthy conference together, Gwen's father sent for her.

"I want to talk to you on a very important subject, my dear," he said, as she came into the library and seated herself on the hassock at his feet. "Will you give me your full attention, Gwen?"

"Certainly, papa," she answered, "if you do not intend to lecture me on the same old subject—'Why don't I marry Cecil St. John?'"

"That is just what I sent for you to discuss," he declared. "The time has come when you must trifle no longer, and the marriage must take place at once, Gwen."

The girl raised her dark, arched eyebrows and looked at him, and the red lips were curled into a very scornful smile.

"The wishes of the lady are supposed to be considered in such cases," she answered; adding, with a slight tremor in her voice; "I—I wish I had never consented to marry him. I have the greatest mind in the world to break with him entirely."

She was quite terrified at the effect those words produced on her father.

"Gwen," he cried, "you cannot mean it! You dare not break with him!"

The girl sprang to her feet, her dark eyes flashing.

"Dare not, papa!" she echoed. "Surely those are strange words to use to a Melville. I never considered it a matter of compulsion—simply one of inclination. Why, pray, could I not break a betrothal if it failed to be agreeable to me?"

Mr. Melville's face grew whiter still; great beads of perspiration stood out on his forehead, and his hands shook like leaves in the wind.

"Papa!" cried Gwen, in terror, springing to his side and flinging her white arms about him, "are you ill?"

"Yes—no," he answered, incoherently.

"There is something the matter, papa," said the girl, holding him off at arm's-length and looking at him steadily. "Tell me what it is."

"If I only dared!" muttered the lawyer, with a deep groan.

Gwen was thoroughly frightened; she never remembered seeing her father agitated like this before. There must be something terribly wrong.

"If I only dared tell you, Gwen," he repeated. "But no, I must not; I—I—Ah, you would hate me, and I could never endure that, and—and it was all done for your mother and you."

"What was done for mamma and me?" persisted Gwen. "Tell me, papa; you need have no fear in confiding anything to your own daughter."

"Swear to me that you will never reveal it to any one if I make a confidante of you—not even to your mother," he said, huskily.

"Not even to mamma!" she asked, in wonder.

"No," he reiterated, sharply; "not even to her."

"I will be guided entirely by your wishes in the matter, papa, and promise absolute secrecy," she said, kneeling down on the hassock at his feet.

He took her firm white hands in his own trembling ones.

"Ah, Gwen! you must not hate me when you know all," he whispered, huskily; "you must not forget that what I did was for your and your mother's sake."

"I shall not forget, papa," said Gwen, earnestly.

"I might as well break into the subject at once, Gwen," he cried, hoarsely, "though it is bitterly hard to find words to explain to you your father's crime."

"Crime!" cried the girl, dropping his hands and recoiling from him in horror.

"Do not shrink from me, Gwen," he muttered.

"Though the whole world turns from me, you must stand by me."

"I will, papa," she declared, earnestly.

"It is not a long story to tell," he groaned; "but it would convey a terrible lesson to the world if it were but known—the story of a man's ambition—and what it led to."

"I was comparatively poor when I married your mother, Gwen," he commenced. "She married me for love, though many a wealthy suitor wooed her; but for all that I knew how dearly she prized wealth and power."

"I vowed to myself that I would win them for her; but I little dreamed how great the cost would be."

"The early struggles of my career as a lawyer it is useless to dwell on."

"The turning point of my life was when I was asked to take charge of a vast estate owned by the infant heir of the St. Johns, and which lay in different portions of the country."

Gwen gave a great start, but instantly suppressed the cry of astonishment that broke from her lips; but without noticing it, he went on—

"I managed the estate for long years, having sole charge of it, and—and it brought temptations. I overdraw my salary many a time and invested it. I went deeper into speculation. Sometimes I lost, but more often I won, and I meant to replace the amounts taken from time to time when I had gained a sufficient competence."

"I reached the height of my ambition when the world called me a millionaire."

"One day that which I had dreaded for long years occurred. Cecil St. John, the heir to the estates, came suddenly upon me without warning and demanded the books."

"I cannot describe the scene that followed."

"He asked for the whole of the cash that had accumulated, also the bonds, and found both missing. There was a stormy scene, and in the midst of it you entered the library, Gwen."

"After the first glance at your bonny face St. John turned to me like a man in a dream."

"Is that lovely girl your daughter, sir?" he asked, in a low breath.

"Yes," I said; and I had no choice but to introduce him to you."

"In a moment or so you passed from the room. Then he turned to me with a strange, odd smile."

"Your daughter is the most beautiful being I have ever beheld!" he said, "she is the first girl I have ever met who has awakened in me the desire to call her wife, and to win her I—I would give a dozen fortunes if I had them. Listen to me," he cried, drawing his chair closer to mine. "This is a case of love at first sight with me. I threatened you a few moments since with disgrace and prison if you could not produce the money due to the St. John estates; now, I make another proposition to you: Influence your daughter to marry me, if it is within your power, and I will let the whole of this unfortunate business drop—and, what is more, you shall have, as your reward, one half of the whole estate. You now see how thoroughly in earnest I am. I—I would go through fire and water to win your lovely daughter, sir!"

"I cannot coerce her in a matter which involves all her future happiness!" I cried. "You could not ask that!"

"If I fail to win her," he cried, darkly, "I cannot be expected to show you mercy—and I will not! I give you fair warning, and we may as well understand each other. Will you use your influences with her in my behalf or not?"

"I saw disgrace and ruin around me, and I realised, even in my excitement and trouble, that discretion would be the better part of valour—to save myself, I must temporise with him, humour him; it would, at least, stave off the horrible difficulties of the present—that was a great consideration."

"What do you say to my proposition?" he asked, sharply.

"My—my daughter could not please me better than by marrying you," I answered, huskily. "I will do all in my power to further that object."

"You know the rest, Gwen," Mr. Melville went on, wearily; "you see the precipice on which I stand, and know what awaits me if you—"



throw him over. But still, my darling child," he cried, "I will not coerce you into this marriage if your heart rebels—not even to save me from a prison cell!"

The girl slipped down on her knees at her father's feet, and looked up at him with dark, terrified eyes.

"You shall never go to prison, father!" she sobbed. "I—I will marry Cecil St. John—and—and—save you!"

## CHAPTER XVIII.

FROM the hour in which the story of her father's crime was unfolded to her Gwendolen Melville was a changed girl. She was no longer capricious and gay; she lost the piquancy that was her greatest charm.

She was not the grand heiress she had always imagined herself to be. One word from St. John and they would step out from that lovely home as poor as the poorest beggars that walked the village streets. Ah, Heaven help her! she had always been so proud of her wealth and power!

She tried to think what she could do if such a dire calamity were to happen—her father in a prison-cell, and her helpless lady-mother looking to her, the stronger of the two, for guidance.

Gwendolen Melville, the beautiful, petted heiress, had never been face to face with the cruel realities of life before. No wonder the thought appalled her. She had always looked down on humble working-girls. What had she, the heiress to a million, in common with them? Now it occurred to her how wonderful and great a thing it was to possess the knowledge of gaining one's own living.

Then her thoughts turned to Rupert Dane—the handsome young lover whom she had spurned so scornfully because he was poor and afflicted.

How little she had realised then that their situations would be reversed so soon.

Ah! if she could but go to Rupert now, and enfold in his strong arms, her dark, curly head on his breast, his fair, handsome, sympathetic face bent over her, and tell him all her troubles! Then in the midst of this intense longing came the thought like a cold chill—he was soon to marry Gladys Barton—plain, humble little Gladys!

And a bitter sigh broke from her lips over the loss that occurred to her:—

"Of all sad words of tongue or pen,  
The saddest are these—'it might have been.'"

"I must not allow my thoughts to dwell upon Rupert," she murmured, with a great tearless sob. "It is useless—useless. There is no way out of the labyrinth of woe that shrouds me save by marriage with Cecil St. John. What matters it, since it must be, whether it takes place this month or next?"

When St. John called the next day he was greatly surprised to see the change in Gwen, and to learn her decision.

"The wedding cannot take place too soon to suit me, my dear," he said, gallantly, attempting to take the little white hand lying so idly in her lap.

But Gwen drew haughtily back.

His brow grew dark as he looked at her.

"Will you tell me what has brought you so suddenly to this view of the case?" he asked.

"No," she said, wearily; "I—I will not talk about it."

"You have no need," he returned, sharply. "I can readily see that your father has made a confidante of you—you know all. Is it not so?"

She did not answer; and as no denial came from her lips, he felt assured that his surmise was quite correct.

When St. John asked if the marriage might not take place that week, Gwen uttered no demur, although the time was alarmingly short.

Since she had learned of the bold St. John had on her father, and that her hand was the price that saved him from a prison cell, she had begun to defeat Cecil St. John.

Despite the haste, it was decided that Gwendolen's marriage should be a grand affair; the site of the whole county should be present.

Both Rupert and Gladys received invitations, but not for worlds would he attend. His mother was sure of this even before she went to him with the two invitations in her hand.

"No, I will not go, mother," he said, huskily; "it could do no good—possibly much evil. You must remember I loved Gwendolen Melville once, mother—loved her with all my heart. Perhaps I could not look calmly on, and see her made the bride of my rival, even though I have so valiantly schooled myself to

"Live, and learn to forget."

as the poet says." No, no, mother, it is safer and wiser for me to stay away."

"He has not yet learned to forget the beautiful heiress so fair of face and false of heart," thought Mrs. Dane, turning away with a troubled look on her kindly face; "but when he is once the husband of sweet little Gladys, so patient, tender, and true, all will be well with him."

At last the all-important day of the wedding rolled around.

The ceremony was to take place at two, and since noon the carriages, freighted with their fair burdens, had been rolling up the village street in the direction of The Mount.

Rupert Dane had business that took him over to the village on this fatal day, and while returning home he could not resist the impulse that led him to take the old familiar road that led past The Mount.

The main street was blocked with vehicles, and, glancing at the scene, Rupert saw that the mansion was all astir. He glanced at his watch as he turned away and saw that it wanted just twenty-five minutes to two.

He intended to take the shortest cut that led to the railway station, but he had not proceeded far ere the sound of a low moan, like that of a human being in dire distress, fell distinctly on his ear. He stopped short and listened, and the sound was repeated, this time from among the bushes by the road-side near where he stood.

A hurried investigation disclosed a man lying face downward among the snow-drifts.

"What is the matter, my good fellow?" said Rupert.

"Get the flask from my breast-pocket, and I—I will tell you," moaned the man; "there is brandy in it. I cannot raise hand or foot—they are frozen, I have been lying here so long. I slipped and fell. I—I am sure I have broken every bone in my body, and I am intrusted with so important an errand."

Rupert found the flask and held it to his lips, and the man took a long draught, which seemed to revive him and collect his scattered senses.

"I have been lying here since early morning," he cried in alight; "now it is mid-day. Tell me," he cried, eagerly, "is it two o'clock yet—or—Ah! surely it is not yet two, and the marriage of Mr. Melville's daughter has not taken place. For the love of Heaven, answer me quickly!"

"No, it is not yet two, and the marriage which was set for that hour has not taken place. But why should this interest you?" said Rupert, wonderingly.

"I must tell you," groaned the man, "and deputise you, whoever you may be, to do my work for me. I am a detective from London—you can see my papers in my pocket, and I am here to stop this nefarious marriage, and arrest the man who is palming himself off as Cecil St. John."

"Great Heaven! what a horrible catastrophe that I should be stricken down at this untimely hour. Listen!" cried the man—"a few words will tell you all—you must hear it—then go with all speed and frustrate the scheme of that rascal—surely the coolest and most audacious one that ever went unthru."

"The real Cecil St. John died in London a few weeks since; this man was his attendant—his valet. The young heir had fallen suddenly ill, and no one could find out his malady. He

**CHRONIC INDIGESTION** and its attendant Misery and Suffering Cured with Tonic "Docton" (purely vegetable), 2/6, from Chemists; 5/- post free from Dr. Hoxs, "Glendower," Bournemouth. Sample bottle and pamphlet, with Analytical Reports, &c., 6 Stamps.

travelled about incognito from place to place, fading slowly away with a disease that puzzled even the doctors.

"On his way through this village with his valet, he saw and fell in love with the village beauty, Gwendolen Melville, and then and there made a secret will, leaving the girl all of his vast possessions. Then he suddenly and mysteriously disappeared from view, no one knowing whence he had gone. His body was soon after found in a lonely spot in the suburbs. I took the case, and it was soon determined that he had died of poison—slow poison, and it was traced to the valet, who had also disappeared."

"I searched for long months for my man, and at last ran him down here, playing the boldest game for high stakes that ever was played—passing himself off for the deceased heir, and on the very eve of marrying the girl to whom poor St. John had left his money."

"In Heaven's name, whoever you may be, good air, go quickly and stop the marriage!—you will have barely time to do it. Never mind me—you can send help to me later on. Go quickly if you would be in time!"

Rupert Dane glanced hurriedly at his watch, and saw that it wanted ten minutes to two.

Would he be in time to prevent Gwen's marriage with the daring impostor?

"I will save her if it is within the bounds of human possibility!" he cried, huskily, his fair handsome face pale as death.

One moment later he was hurrying with all speed towards the village church.

As he neared the entrance gate he paused a moment for breath, and in that moment strange thoughts came to him. He remembered vividly the scene in the conservatory when Gwen had scornfully thrown the love he offered her back into his face, taunting him with his poverty, and even with his affliction.

And now his brow darkened and his hands clinched at the thought of it.

Why should he raise his hand to hold the beautiful false coquette back from the fate she had courted? Would it not be a just retribution to make no outcry and let the fatal ceremony proceed?

There and then he fought the fiercest battle that man ever fought with his own conscience—the fight between right and a deadly wrong.

Rupert leaned heavily against the stone gate-post, realising that the moments were flying swift-winged past, and Gwendolen Melville's fate was in his hands.

Suddenly from an adjacent tower the hour of two rang sharply out on the night air.

## CHAPTER XIX.

LOUD and clear, like notes of subtle warning, the clock in the belfry tolled the hour of two, and each stroke fell heavily on the heart of Rupert Dane, as he stood out there in the snow-drifts, leaning against the massive iron gate, looking up at the church, and listening to the hum of voices from within.

Should he save Gwendolen Melville from the awful fate that menaced her, or let the marriage go on? It would be a glorious revenge.

The thought found place but an instant in his brain; in the next he was his own loyal, noble self again.

He had loved the beautiful little heiress too well to stand silently by and see her made the dupe of a designing and daring adventurer, and for the sake of the old love he would save her now.

Opening the ponderous gate, Rupert advanced quickly up the broad gravelled walk.

In the porch he met two of the servants whom he sent with all despatch to the aid of the injured man lying up the road, and hastily entered the church.

Rupert went directly to the vestry, but failing to find Mr. Melville there, he hurried into the church.

What if he were too late? What if the prospective bride and bridegroom were already at the altar? A chill shot through his heart at the very thought of it.

The door was open, and standing there on the threshold, where he abruptly paused, he saw Gwen arrayed in her bridal robes.

Before he could utter the words on his lips, she raised her dark eyes and saw him.

"Rupert," she cried out in a stifled voice. "Is it really you, or do I dream that you are standing there?"

"Yes, it is I," he answered, huskily. "Thank Heaven I am not too late! I so feared that I would be. You must give me a moment's audience. I have something of great importance to say to you."

"Come here," she said, indicating a seat in the darkest corner of the church, while the bridal party looked on in wonder at the interruption.

"You must send for your father," said Rupert. "What I have to say will interest him equally with yourself."

With much wonder Gwen obeyed.

It was with great surprise the lawyer saw Rupert Dane with a face pale as death, when he entered a moment later; but he shook hands with the young man very cordially. Dane had risen greatly in his estimation since he had fallen heir to such a princely fortune.

"I have come on a very peculiar mission, sir," said Rupert, hesitatingly. "I hardly know how to broach so delicate a subject."

"Plunge into it without preamble," replied the lawyer, quickly; adding, "It is not like you to hesitate over an important matter."

"Yes, it is better to speak outright," admitted Rupert, "and I will proceed to do so. I am here to warn you against the man who would lead your daughter to the altar at this moment to prove to you that he is an impostor! Thank Heaven, I am here in time to prevent the villain from consummating the most dastardly scheme that ever was concocted! To be brief the real Cecil St. John is dead. This man was his valet, and he conceived the daring plan of passing himself off for the heir of the St. Johns to those who knew of the young man but were unaware of his sudden death."

Then Rupert proceeded rapidly to relate his meeting with the detective from whom he had learned the facts upon his promise to hurry on to the church and stop the wedding.

Gwen listened like one turned to stone; but as he finished, she rose quickly, crying— "Heaven and—Rupert has saved me, papa!"

She took one step forward and fell at her father's feet in a death-like swoon.

Mr. Melville sprang quickly forward and raised her in his arms and carried her into the house.

"My child has had a narrow escape, Dana," he said. "I thank Heaven we have made the discovery of the rascal's perfidy before the marriage," and his voice sounded so hoarse and unnatural that Rupert was startled.

The lawyer's face was dark and stormy, and the veins stood out on his forehead like whipcords.

"Come," he said, motioning for Rupert to follow him, when he had consigned Gwen to her maid's care. "The fellow is below, and he shall answer to me for this at the point of a revolver. Marie," he said to the little maid who looked quite frightened at seeing Gwen lying on the divan in a dead faint, "attend your mistress."

And without another word, motioning Rupert to follow him, quitted the boudoir.

Hearing a commotion in the lower corridor, they hastened below. The servants were carrying in on a rude litter the injured man whom Rupert had sent them for.

"I beg your pardon for the noise we have occasioned, sir," said John, the butler; "but one word will explain it. As we were bringing in this man we encountered Mr. St. John in the corridor. One glance at his face, and Mr. St. John started back with a terrible oath, and before any one of us could collect his scattered senses, he drew a long, thin dagger from his breast-

pocket, and hurled it with the rapidity of lightning and with all his strength at the man's heart, then wheeled about, dashed through the library to the window, threw open the sash, and plunged headlong out into the grounds. We were all so taken aback, sir, that we were fairly paralysed. I am thankful to say, however, that the dagger missed its mark."

"Take the man to the servants' hall below, and see that every attention is shown him; and mind, do not repeat what you have seen and heard," returned Mr. Melville, sternly.

None of the guests had witnessed the occurrence. He was thankful for that.

"The fellow recognised the detective, and made good his escape," he said, turning to Rupert.

"Yes," responded the young man. "Perhaps it would be as well to let him go."

"I agree with you," assented Mr. Melville. "Come to my library; we will talk the matter over after I have dispersed the guests. Ah! what a terrible blow this will be for my wife as well as poor little Gwen!"

"I more than regret that I have not the time to spare, sir," returned Rupert, "but the fact is, we leave early to-morrow for our new home, and I am here to bid you good-bye as well as to serve Miss Gwen. I shall not, in all probability, see Mrs. Melville or Miss Gwendolen again. Kindly say farewell to them for me."

Mr. Melville wrung the young man's hand in silence. It was with genuine regret that he parted from him.

The announcement of Miss Melville's indisposition was quite a surprise to the guests, and sympathy was expressed for her on all sides. No one guessed the true cause of it. The bridegroom had been seen at the church, flushed and happy. There was certainly no cloud in the sky in that direction.

Mrs. Melville was quite as much puzzled at the turn things had taken as any of the guests.

It was not until the last guest had departed that the smile quickly faded from her husband's face, and he informed her of the true state of affairs.

She flew at once, in great trepidation, to Gwen's boudoir.

She found the wedding garments scattered about the apartment, and her daughter, in her pale-blue silk wrapper, all in a heap on the rug before the glowing fire in the grate.

The mother knelt down beside her, with a deep sob, and the only tears the proud lady-mother had shed for long years dropped on the girl's lovely face, as she laid her dark curly head on her bosom.

"Gwen, darling," she murmured, "do not grieve. Everything will come out right in the end. You may congratulate yourself upon having escaped one of the greatest rousés in the country."

Gwen raised her head with a proud gesture. "I am not grieving, mamma," she said. "I am glad to be free from this entanglement, as I had grown to look upon him with positive hatred. I—I should have spurned him had I dared."

"Dared!" repeated Mrs. Melville, looking at her in bewilderment. "That is a strange word for you to use, dear. Certainly the matter was not compulsory."

Gwen realised by that remark that her father had not made a confidante of her mother in regard to the past. He had also enjoined her by a solemn pledge never to reveal his secret to her.

"No, I am not sorry that this affair has turned out as it has, mamma," she repeated, her cheeks reddening, her dark eyes sparkling, and her voice trembling slightly as she spoke. "I truly believe that everything happens for the best in this world, and it was not to be that I should marry that rascal. Perhaps there is a better fate in store for me."

"I hope so, my love," returned Mrs. Melville; and involuntarily the thoughts of both reverted to Rupert Dane.

The next instant his name was on Gwen's lips.

"But for Rupert my life would have been wrecked, mamma," she said.

## EPPS'S COCOA

Possesses the following  
Distinctive Merits:

**DELICACY OF FLAVOUR,  
SUPERIORITY in QUALITY.**

**GRATEFUL and COMFORTING  
to the NERVOUS or DYSPEPTIC.**  
NUTRITIVE QUALITIES UNRIVALLED  
Sold in 2-lb. & 1-lb. Packets, & 1-lb. Tins.

JAMES EPPS & CO., Ltd.,  
Homeopathic Chemists, London.

## EPPS'S COCOA

AN HONEST MEDICINE.

**DR. DAVIS'S FAMOUS FEMALE PILLS.**  
THE MOST EFFECTUAL ON EARTH.

NO IRREGULARITY CAN RESIST THEM  
Sd., 2s. 1d., 3s. 6d., 4s. 6d.; extra strong, 11s. Sent  
free from observation by

Dr. Davis, 309, Portobello Road, London, W.,  
or order of any chemist.

Dr. Davis's little book for MARRIED WOMEN most  
invaluable, sent free on receipt of a stamped addressed  
envelope.

## TOOTH-ACHE

CURED INSTANTLY BY

**BUNTER'S**  
Prevents Decay, Saves  
Extraction, Relieves Nerve  
Pain.

**NERVINE**  
Nervine Headache and all Nerve  
Pains removed by BUNTER'S  
NERVINE. All Chemists, 1s. 1d.

**TOWLE'S PENNYROYAL PILLS**  
& STEEL  
FOR FEMALES.

QUICKLY CURE ALL IRREGULARITIES, REMOVE ALL  
OBSTRUCTIONS, and relieve the distressing symptoms  
prevalent with the sex. Boxes, 1/11 & 2/6 (contains three  
times the quantity), of all Chemists. Send anywhere  
on receipt of 15 or 24 stamps, by E. T. TOWLE & Co.,  
Manufacturers, Dryden St., Nottingham.

Beware of Imitations, injurious and worthless.

**£20** TOBACCONISTS COMMENCING.

See Ill. Guide (250 pages) 3d. How to open a  
Cigar Store, 250 to 2500. TOBACCONISTS  
OUTFITTING CO., 156, Euston Road, London.  
The largest and original house (50 years' expe-  
rience). Manager, R. V. T. 156.

**KEARSLEY'S 10 YEARS' REPUTATION**  
**WIDOW WELCH'S**  
**FEMALE PILLS.**

Awarded Certificate of Merit for the cure of all obstructions,  
irregularities, anaemia, and all female complaints. They contain  
no irritants, and have the approval of the Medical Profession  
in every part of the world. The only genuine are in White Paper  
Wrappers, and have the name of "G. and G. Kearsley." Boxes  
1s. 1d. and 2s. 6d., of all chemists; sent privately on receipt of  
15 or 24 stamps, by the makers, G. and G. KEARSLEY, 17, North  
Street, Walthamstow.

**DISINFECT**  
WITH  
**"SANITAS"**

FLUIDS, POWDERS AND SOAPS.  
"How to Disinfect," book, free.

The "Sanitas" Co. Ltd., Bethnal Green, E.

**OTTEY'S STRONG FEMALE PILLS.**

Quickly and certainly remove all obstructions, arising  
from any cause whatever, where St. Paul and Pennyroyal  
fail. Invaluable to women. By post, under cover, for  
14 and 25 stamps from THOMAS OTTEY, Chemist, 82,  
Hagley Road, Birmingham. Please mention LONDON  
READER.

HEALTH, like success in life, is to be gained by  
paying attention to details. It is better to try  
to keep from catching cold than to be trying to  
avoid infection. More can be done to check  
cholera by keeping houses clean than by using  
tons of disinfectants. Nature gives health. It  
is a man's perversity in departing from Nature's  
teaching which leads to disease. Nature intended  
all to have fresh air, sufficient food, uncontamin-  
ated water, and exercise. Let us accept Nature's  
bequest, if we prefer health to disease.

"THE HUMAN HAIR: Its Restoration and Preser-  
vation." A Practical Treatise on Baldness, Greyness,  
Superfluous Hair, &c. 40 pages. Post-free six stamps  
from Dr. HORN, Hair Specialist, Bournemouth.



Mr. Melville looked keenly at her daughter; then, after a minute's pause, said:—

"Did you know that Rupert and his mother leave to-morrow, Gwen?"

Gwen sprang to her feet, her face white as it would be in death.

"Rupert leaves to-morrow, mamma!" she repeated. "Why, what makes you think so?"

"He bid your father good-bye for both of us, saying that in all probability he should not have time to see us again. He goes to the beautiful home which he has had prepared for the bride he intends soon to take."

"Mamma!" cried Gwen, in an awful whisper, "stop! stop, I implore you! Do not say another word on the subject! You are breaking my heart!"

(To be continued.)

## FACETIÆ.

FIRST FAIR ONE: "Mabel boasts she has lovers by the score." Second Fair One: "Well, the score must be 0 to 1."

SEN: "When would you consider a man was happily married?" He: "When he's wedded to his work."

ENGLISHMAN: "I have no time to waste fighting a duel." Frenchman: "It only requires two seconds."

WHAT is the difference between perseverance and obstinacy? One is a strong will and the other is a strong won't.

SHEP-MADE MAN (examining school of which he is manager): "Now, boy, what is the capital of Olland?" Boy: "An H, sir."

REPORTER: "So that absconding cashier got away by sacrificing his beard, did he?" Detective: "Yes, I missed him by a close shave."

HE: "There is Miss Glover over there. She is superb. She is considered perfectly formed." She: "But very imperfectly informed."

FRIEND: "Do thoughts that came to you long ago ever return?" Scribbler: "Oh, yes—if I enclosed a stamped envelope."

SEN: "Can your friend do any tricks with the bicycle?" He: "I should think so. He succeeded in getting the one he rides on credit."

BOY: "Mr. Smitters wants to know if you'll lend him an umbrella. He says you know him." You may say I do know him. He will probably understand why you didn't bring the umbrella."

"I HOPE I see you well," he said fluently to the old farmer leaning on his hoe. "I hope you do," was the unexpected answer; "but if you don't see me well, young man, put on specs."

"So, Tom, that old liar, Dick Fibbins, is dead?" "Yes, his yarus are wound up; he'll lie no more—the old rascal." "Indeed, it's my opinion, Tom, that he'll lie still!"

"I CANNOT understand," said the bachelor clerk, "why a man's wife is called his 'better half.'" "You would," said the married clerk, "if you had to divide your salary with one."

SUSPICIOUS TAILOR: "There, stand in that position, please, and look straight at that notice while I take your measure." Customer reads the notice:—"Terms Cash."

TEACHER: "What is the meaning of 'acclimated?'" Papd: "That is when people have the shakes so long that they don't mind 'em any more."

ANGRY MANAGER: "What did you mean by smiling in that death scene?" Actor: "With the salary you pay death seems a pleasant relief."

HAMLET STARRS: "We had a poor house to-night; owing to the war, I suppose." Pitt: "Well now, I thought it was owing to the piece."

TAILOR (to mother who is having a suit made for her boy): "Will you have the shoulders padded?" Tommy (interpreting): "No, ma—tell him to pad the trousers."

MISS SLATER: "Are you living in the handsome home left you by your aunt, colonel—the house you went to law about?" Colonel: "No. My lawyer resides there."

"WHO wrote of the seven ages of man, Johnny?" William Shakespeare. "And are there seven ages of women?" "I guess so; but she sticks by one of 'em all the time."

"WHAT profession do you follow?" He: "The medical profession." She: "Ah! then you're a doctor?" He: "Oh, no; I'm an undertaker!"

AUTHOR: "But why do you charge me more for printing this time than usual?" Publisher: "Because the compositors were constantly falling asleep over your novel."

"TOM, where can I get a good two-foot rule?" "I can give you one on the spot, John." "Well, let's have it." "Don't wear tight shoes! That rule applies to both feet."

HONEYBUN: "Why did you tell Wearisome that you hadn't time to listen to his fish story?" Springhill: "I thought I had just as much right to tell a lie as he had."

MRS. CUMSO: "Your husband dresses very quietly." Mrs. Cawker: "Does he? You ought to hear him when he can't find his collar, or his sleeve links become mislaid."

"I AM saddest when I write humorous articles," said a "fanny man" to an acquaintance. "And I," replied the acquaintance, "am saddest when I read them."

DIXON: "How did Hackwrite's new play take in London?" Hixon: "He informs me that it met with unheeded success." Dixon: "Is that so?" Hixon: "Yes; after the first night it was never heard of again."

MISTRESS (greatly distressed as Bridget awkwardly drops the chicken on the floor when about to place it on the table): "Dear me! Now we've lost our dinner!" Bridget: "Indade ye've not. Oi have me foot on it!"

"How still they are!" remarked Mrs. Fogg apropos of the young couple in the next room. "Yes," replied Colonel F.; "it reminds me of my Army days. It was always wonderfully quiet just previous to an engagement."

MAMMA: "Playing Indians is so rough. Why are you crying? Have they been scalping you again?" Spotted Panther (*alias* Willie): "No, Mamma; we have been smoking the pipe of peace!"

A SHIPWRECKED SAILOR said they were out of provisions, in an open boat, for twenty days. "How did you live?" "Sure, sir, we dined on one of the officers. It was the first mate we'd had in a month!"

ONE day a tramp entered a chemist's shop in Wrexham with the usual "I beg pardon, sir—" "Oh, that's all right, my man; don't you trouble about that," said the proprietor, "so long as you don't beg anything else!"

SEN: "I'm very sorry, Captain Gibbs, but circumstances over which I have no control compel me to say no." Captain Gibbs: "May I be allowed to inquire what these circumstances are?" She: "Yours."

BUTCHER: "You've got six or eight new boarders, ain't you, mum?" Mrs. Silmdiet: "Yes. They came yesterday. How did you know?" Butcher: "I noticed you was buying half a pound more of everything."

OLETIMER: "Is your married life one grand, sweet song?" Newlywed: "Well, since our baby's been born it's been more like an opera, full of grand marches, with loud calls for the author every night."

"I TOLD the editor I had some poetical ideas I wanted to carry out." "What did he say?" "He professed to be delighted. 'Carrying them out,' he said, 'was neater and quieter than throwing them out.'"

HE (wondering if Williams has been accepted): "Are both your rings heirlooms?" She (concealing the hand): "Oh, dear, yes. One has been in the family since the time of Alfred, but the other is newer and (blushing) duly dates from the conquest."

"YOU are a wicked boy!" said Miss Prim. "How could you rob that nest! No doubt, the poor mother is now grieving for the loss of her eggs." "Oh, she don't care," replied the urchin, edging away; "she's up in your hat!"

GRANDPA (at the Zoo): "Don't get scared, Willy; the tiger is about to be fed; that's what makes him jump and roar so." Willy (easily): "Oh, I ain't afraid, grandpa; papa's the same way when his meals ain't ready."

DUCT: "Good gracious, Maud, it cannot be possible that you are going to marry that newspaper man!" Edna: "You must not breathe it to a soul, but I intend to break the engagement as soon as I get all my poetry printed."

"How will you have your eggs cooked?" asked the waiter. "Make any difference in the cost of 'em?" inquired the customer, cautiously. "No." "Then cook 'em with a nice slice of ham!" said the customer, greatly relieved.

CHARLES: "I don't see how blank can make any money out of that tobaccoist's business of his. He's always smoking his best cigars himself." Fred: "Oh, that's his method of advertising." Charles: "How so?" Fred: Puffing his goods."

GAVIN: "There's one thing I like about Jones's shop, you can order your goods through the telephone, and, after a short wait, have them delivered." Bailey: "That is just what I don't like." Gavin: "What?" Bailey: "The short wait."

DOCTOR: "Why, how is this, my dear sir? You sent me a letter stating you had been attacked by measles, and I find you suffering from rheumatism." Patient: "Well, you see, doctor, it's like this—there wasn't a soul in the house who knew how to spell rheumatism!"

MRS. FLATBUSH (of Brooklyn): "It's perfectly dreadful, the way Mr. De Myrtle is acting. I shouldn't be surprised to hear any day that he'd run off from his wife." Mrs. Hibridge: "Mercy! Is he neglecting his family?" Mrs. Flatbush: "Awfully! I saw him out walking only yesterday without the baby."

"DID I understand you to say that Bill Jones is dead?" "Yes. Died last Thursday." "Is that possible?" "Yes, that's right." "So Bill Jones is dead? Well, well!" "Yes, he's dead." "Do you know, I can scarcely believe it, poor chap! Poor Bill! I knew him well. So he's really dead, is he?" "Well, if he ain't dead, he's in a pretty bad predicament. I saw him buried."

"ISN'T there something in my policy," asked a caller at an insurance office the other day, "about my 'having to report any change of residence?'" "Yes, sir," said the man at the nearest desk, picking up a pen. "Where have you moved to?" "I haven't moved anywhere," rejoined the caller. "I have made a change in my residence by painting it a light straw colour and putting a chimney-pot on the kitchen chimney. I think that's all. Good-day."

BUYER: "Lookes here, you! You said this horse was sound and kind and free from tricks. The first day I drove him he balked a dozen times, and he's as bad to-day." Dealer: "Um! You've been wondering if I cheated you, maybe!" "Yes, I have." "And the first time you drove the boss you sort of wondered if he hadn't some tricks, didn't you?" "Of course." "And you kept saying to yourself, 'I wonder if that there horse will balk, maybe?'" "Probably." "And you had your mind on it a good deal, most like!" "That's true." That's wot's the matter. You've hypnotised him! See!"

SCENE: Confectioner's shop. Boy: How much are those buns?" Waitress: "One penny each." "Gimme one." She does so. "What's the price of them tarts?" "Same price." "Gimme me one of them, then." So he hands back the bun, and she gives him a tart, which he soon demolishes, and then turns to go. "Here, you didn't pay me for that tart," said the waitress. "I give yer the bun for it!" replied the boy, assuming a defiant attitude. "Yes, but you didn't pay me for the bun." "Because I didn't eat it." Boy walks out and leaves her meditating.

## SOCIETY.

A NOVELTY in hairpins is a narrow band of gold, two or three inches long, studded with imitation or real jewels, with a gold hairpin attached. When the pin is in place the band shuts down and confines the stray locks.

THE Royal palace at Madrid is one of the most beautiful structures in the world, having been built by an Italian architect in the early part of the last century, at a cost of £1,000,000. The material is white marble. It is 470 feet each way, with a court 240 feet square, roofed with glass.

THE Duke and Duchess of Connaught, who are to go to Scotland for a month when they leave Aldershot at the beginning of October, will pay a visit to Lord and Lady Tweeddale at Yeater House, Haddingtonshire, before they join the Queen at Balmoral.

THE Queen is said to possess some very old watches. Among them are two little gold ones, by Breguet, supposed to be one hundred years old. One is a repeater, the other a blind man's watch. Both of these are in constant use and keep good time. They are about the size of a two-shilling piece, and have silver dials.

THE Duchess of Coburg is to pay a short visit to the Queen at Balmoral about the middle of the month, after which she is going to St. Petersburg. The Duchess, who has not visited Russia since the funeral of her brother, the late Emperor, in December 1891, will probably spend most of the winter at St. Petersburg.

THE Queen has kindly consented to be patron of the bazaar which is to be held in Glasgow in November in aid of the funds of the Argyllshire Nursing Association for providing Queen's nurses for that county. The Duchess of Argyll has been instrumental in promoting the association, and it is affiliated to the Queen's Jubilee Nurses Institution for Scotland.

It is by no means generally known that the Prince of Wales was not only born Duke of Cornwall in the Peerage of England, but also Duke of Rothesay, Earl of Carrick, and Baron of Renfrew in that of Scotland, and that his office of Great Steward of Scotland, which was also his birthright, precedes his titles, and in point of antiquity is superior to his principality of Wales, of which he is, strictly speaking, the tributary Sovereign by personal creation.

A SMALL army of workmen is to invade Windsor Castle, where somewhat extensive repairing and renovating operations are to be carried out. This work will include the repainting and re-decorating of the principal of Her Majesty's own private apartments and some of the State Apartments. For this purpose the most skilled workmen and artists obtainable are to be employed, for the decorations are rich and artistic in the extreme, and no common or garden house painters and decorators could attempt their renewal.

THE conclusion of peace between Spain and America does not, unfortunately, make matters much better for the Queen Regent, as internal troubles, possibly culminating in revolution, are too generally anticipated. In view of any outbreak of the kind, preparations have already been made for the "Austrian princess" to fly with the young King to her native country, a castle on the estate of the Archduke Eugen having been already prepared for their reception, and a special route from Madrid to the frontier has been mapped out.

NEWFOUNDLAND is illustrating its loyalty very prettily by issuing a series of postage stamps bearing different Royal portraits. The first of the series was, of course, that of the Queen—a one-cent stamp; this was followed by a two-cent stamp bearing the portrait of the Prince of Wales; and now a new three-cent stamp bearing a charming portrait of the Princess of Wales has appeared. It was stated in some quarters that this new stamp was to bear the head of the Duchess of York, but this mistake arose from the fact that the next issue will be a half-cent stamp with head of little Prince Edward of York.

## STATISTICS.

If kept going the wheels of a watch travel 3,558½ miles in a year.

In London alone, 14,000 letters have on the average, to be "returned" every week.

ACCORDING to careful estimates, three hours of close study wear the body more than a whole day of hard physical exertion.

It is estimated that an oak of average size, during the five months it is in leaf every year, sucks from the earth about one hundred and twenty-three tons of water.

THE total value of the United Kingdom is now said to be £10,000,000,000, and added to this several thousand millions are invested out of the home country.

## GEMS.

THE best thing to do with your troubles is to introduce them to your blessings.

In the garden of human life we can only tag the pretty flowers of evil as dangerous—we cannot exterminate them.

A LAUGH, to be joyous, must flow from a joyous heart, for without kindness there can be no true joy.

WORK and see how well you will be. Work and see how cheerful you will be. Work and see how independent you will be.

COURTESY is the passport to success. We double the power of our life when we add to its gifts unfailing courtesy. The world always begrudges room to a boor.

## HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

ICED TEA.—Put two tablespoonfuls of young Hyson tea in the pot, and when positive that the water is boiling in the kettle pour two quarts over the tea and let it boil a moment; then strain and add the juice of three lemons and two cups of sugar. Serve when cold with ice.

ICED COFFEE.—To one pint of ice cold milk add one pint of cream, whipped to a froth, and enough cold black coffee to give it the desired strength and flavour. Sweeten to taste, and beat all together for several minutes with a cream whip. Serve in glasses half filled with cracked ice.

PREPARING EGGS FOR GARNISHING.—According to an experienced cook, if hard-boiled eggs are put into vinegar and allowed to remain there for several hours, they will acquire sufficient consistency to allow of cutting into very small pieces without breaking, provided a very sharp, small knife is used.

VEAL ROLLS.—One pound cold fillet of veal, a few slices of fat bacon, forcemeat, one egg, breadcrumbs. Cut six slices from a cold fillet of veal, rub over with eggs put a thin slice of fat bacon on each, and over this spread a little forcemeat; roll up tightly, dip in egg and breadcrumbs, and fry a rich brown.

STUFFED EGGS.—Cut six hard-boiled eggs in two. Take out the yolks, and mash them to a paste with a tablespoonful of chopped cooked ham fat and lean together, a teaspoonful of cream, and salt and pepper to taste, also two or three drops of onion juice, if liked. Fill the whites of the eggs with this mixture, join the two halves, and wrap in paraffin paper.

MILK SHAKE.—Flavour rich milk, or, better still, half milk and half cream, with vanilla and sugar to suit the taste. If only milk is used add the beaten white of an egg. Put in a screw-topped jar or bottle and shake until it foams, but not hard or long enough to make it buttery. Pour in a large glass, and, if liked sprinkle grated nutmeg on top.

## MISCELLANEOUS.

A NEW kind of cloth is being made in Lyons from the down of hens, ducks, and geese.

IN MEMORIAM the late Princess Mary Adelaide, Duchess of Teck, a drinking fountain is to be erected close to the Star and Garter, Richmond.

SCIENTISTS say that the orange was formerly a berry, and that it has been developing for over 7,000 years.

THE goldfish is a great coward, and a tiny fish with the courage to attack it can frighten it almost to death.

HALF the ships in the world are British. The best of them can be converted into ships of war in forty-eight hours.

THE chameleon's eyes are situated in bony sockets projecting from the head. By this contrivance the animal can see in any direction without the slightest motion, save of the eye.

THE age of whales is ascertained by size and number of laminae of the whalebone, which increases yearly. Ages of three hundred and four hundred years have been assigned to whales from these indications.

THE Imperial Library of Russia, established by Peter the Great in 1714, is the third among the world's great libraries. It contains about 1,200,000 volumes and about 26,000 manuscripts.

THE Persians in 516 B.C. invented a transparent glass varnish which they laid over sculptured rocks to preserve them from bad weather. This coating has lasted to our day, while the rocks beneath are honeycombed.

THE favourite means of transportation in Havana is by one-horse victorias, of which there are thousands. Two persons are enabled to go to any point within the city limits for a peseta, which is equal to about sevenpence.

THE second great steel arch bridge which is being built across the gorge at Niagara Falls, to take the place of the last of the suspension bridges, is to be the largest of its kind in the world. The total length of the bridge will be 1,268 feet.

ONE of the newest things in the building line is the aluminium hut for Klondyke miners. When packed for carriage it weighs 110 pounds. It is composed of four sides and a roof of thin sheets of aluminium, and when put up the house contains 190 cubic feet.

A CLOCK in St. Petersburg has ninety-five faces, indicating simultaneously the time at thirty different spots on the earth's surface, besides the movements of the earth and planets. So complicated are the works of this wonderful timepiece that it took two years to put it together after it had been sent in detached pieces from Switzerland.

WHEN an Arab woman intends marrying again after the death of her husband, she goes the night before the ceremony to pay a visit to his grave. There she kneels and prays him not to be offended—not to be jealous. As, however, she feels he will be offended or jealous, the widow brings with her a donkey laden with two goats' skins with water. The prayer ended, she proceeds to pour the water upon the grave to keep the first husband cool under the irritating circumstances about to take place, and having well saturated him, she then departs.

A RIVAL to the green carnation is the black rose, to the cultivation of which a Russian betanist has been devoting himself for some years. Now that he has achieved success he threatens to come to London and exhibit the results of his misdirected experiments. When he arrives, he will no doubt be invited to explain the purposes for which he considers that his sable blossoms should be utilized. Since he can hardly anticipate that they will be employed for table decoration or for personal adornment, it can only be supposed that he intends to recommend them for use at funerals. It is happily improbable, however, that English horticulturists will be anxious to disfigure their gardens by cultivating them, even for that purpose.



# NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

**J. B.**—Look in the London directory.

**HARVEST INQUIRY.**—It is a matter for mutual arrangement.

**WARRANT.**—You can take the goods in default of payment.

**B. L.**—You had better submit the building contract to a lawyer.

**HOPKINS.**—By establishing identity you would procure the legacy.

**QUERREY.**—Any good seedsman, nurseryman or florist will get it for you.

**M. A. J.**—Her property devolves on the Crown, as she has no legal next-of-kin.

**AUTOGRAPH COLLECTOR.**—The earliest autograph in existence is that of Richard II.

**ONE IN DISTRESS.**—The division of property would be a matter for mutual agreement.

**B. H.**—There are two different breeds of this dog—the long and the smooth-haired.

**ROBERT'S DARING.**—Wellington and Marlborough head the list of our military heroes.

**IN NEED OF ADVICE.**—It would be against our rule to recommend any particular office.

**UNHAPPY ESTHER.**—You should apply to one of the local clergy or your district visitor.

**AN OLD READER.**—You had better place all the evidence before you before a solicitor.

**JOHN BULL.**—You had better pay; so far as we can understand the case he has the law on his side.

**THOMAS AMIE.**—The one way to get rid of the mildew in your black silk is to re-dye the cloth.

**JACK TAR.**—We do not give instructions in tattooing or in any other method of personal disfigurement.

**ONYXITY.**—We are unable to give you any information in regard to the matter mentioned in your letter.

**HOPKINS AMIE.**—You have stated the case in such a confused manner that we cannot catch your meaning.

**JAMES.**—To remove rust from steel rub with kerosene, and soak for a day, polishing with emery dust and kerosene.

**AN ANXIOUS WIFE.**—Your marriage is perfectly legal notwithstanding the mistake made in the orthography of your name.

**THESEAN.**—Thespis was the inventor of tragedy, hence springs the phrase of the Thespian art as applied to the drama.

**GIPSY.**—The first Lord Mayor's Show in London was in the year 1498, when the procession went to Westminster by water.

**AMBITION.**—Not one out of a hundred aspirants to histrionic renown ever attains the position of a third-rate actor or actress.

**HEAD OF THE HOUSE.**—As he has broken the contract by non-payment of interest, you can proceed for recovery of the principal.

**MILDRED ARMY.**—Under the circumstances you mention, and considering the girl's age, she is justified in acting on her own responsibility.

**FUCKER.**—The wife in such circumstances does not take her husband's rank or estate; she enjoys the distinction of associating with him, that is all.

**A. P.**—The Queen could declare war against or without advice of Ministers, but being in consequence refused supplies could not enter into conflict.

**LADY JANE.**—On application to Secretary, Civil Service Commission, Cannon-row, Westminster, S.W., you can ascertain when and where next examination takes place.

**DAIRY MAID.**—Beauty is, in part at least, the result of fitness of physical life, and she who has this will be in good health and happy, and far more beautiful. Ill-health is the great foe to beauty.

**COOKIE.**—If the water is very hard, a tiny bit of soda, not larger than a pea, added will make the vegetables cook in it tender and of better colour. Ordinary water does not require such addition.

**M. R. F.**—You had better write to the Government Telegraphs Information Office, 31, Broadway, London, E.C., when latest trade reports from colony, with information regarding fares, &c., will at once be sent gratis.

**BARBIFOL.**—Many men who have possessed excellent, well-trained minds and the keenest judgment, have however, been very poor speakers. Addison, the greatest master of English prose, was nothing of an orator.

**SUMMERER, GENT.**—The best among those you mention are—Osman Doyle, William Black, Walter Bennett, James Payne, Charles Kingsley, George Elliot, W. Harrison Ainsworth, Marion Crawford, Lady G. Follen, and Thomas Hardy.

**HONEYWINE.**—The bread should be at least a day old, the crust should be cut away. Well-made sandwiches are a luxury. For long trips the filling for sandwiches may be packed (as may also butter) in a self-sealing jar, and applied to bread as wanted.

**ANXIOUS ONE.**—In your letter you simply mention the word school, without signifying what school, or even what county or country it is in. It would be best for you to call personally at the school, and you would then obtain the information you require.

**MAIMIE.**—To give a frosted appearance dissolve sufficient Epsom salts in beer, or in water in which rice has been boiled and then strained away. Apply the mixture with a sponge or brush, and in crystallizing it will produce a pleasing frosted appearance.

**UNCERTAIN.**—You were right in objecting to an acquaintance begun in such an informal manner. As you spoke by accident and not intent, you may be excused for the act. But we advise you do not let it happen again, for the excuse may not seem plausible.

**O. L. R.**—It would be necessary to treat the material with an acid to remove the tannin, which is a fruit stain; either wash with water containing a small quantity of liquor ammoniac, then expose the stain to fumes of sulphur or wash with a concentrated solution of tartaric acid, then rinse in pure water.

**W. T.**—The fish you mean is, we think, the Barracuda. It is a voracious, pike-like ephyrinoid fish, usually of the tropic seas, especially the West Indies. It grows sometimes to a length of ten feet. In Australian waters there is an edible gampyloid fish of this order, called also Barracouta.

**MISERABLE DOLLIE.**—So long as a man who has been in the habit of danger of intoxication continues to drink he will go where drink is sold; he will be habitually in the company of associates who will easily overpower his best resolution. For such men total abstinence is almost the only hope.

**FLORA.**—You must get rid of the oil as thoroughly as you can by washing it out with soda and water carefully, so as to leave no greasy trace behind. Follow that with warm water to which add some vinegar. Rub all off, and let them dry for a day or two. Then repolish with French polish or one of the reviving furniture polishes we have given from time to time.

## BABY'S KISS.

I CARRIED it with me down town,  
I slipped at its sweetness all day;  
It made me more patient with worrying work,  
More thoughtful of what I should say.

And once in the thick of the fray,  
When the flame of my anger flashed high,  
I cooled with the thought of my baby's smile  
As she kissed me a loving good-bye.

When I thrust at my workfellow's fault  
Whom I deemed in honour to quarrel,  
I sheathed the blade of my scorn as I thought,  
"He has no baby to kiss."

Whatever of pleasure or pain  
Thy father may haply miss,  
God make him, my darling, more fit  
Each night for thy welcoming kiss.

**KATE.**—Take one pound of brown sugar, boil in four quarts of water for a minute; when cold add two ounces tartaric acid, one pennyworth essence of lemon, and white of egg whisked; strain and bottle it; for a drink pour out half a tumbler, fill up with water, add a little baking soda, stir about, and you have a fine cheap cooling drink.

**SHYNESS.**—You must try and acquire self-possession by practice. Observe your friends and try and learn from them. We should think the best plan would be for you to confide in some woman, if you have any among your friends, and get a little coaching. Such a course would do far more good than any rules we may lay down for you to observe.

**CONSTANT READER.**—Bad breath comes from defective teeth or bad digestion and sour stomach. The only way is to eradicate it. By taking anything that perfumes the breath you only disguise the fetidness. Have the teeth cleaned, and if decayed, either pulled out or filled. Keep the bowels open and eat only plain digestible food.

**UNHAPPY ONE.**—A man must be held by the same arts by which you won him. Many a woman has lost happiness and the man she once loved because she has forgotten to love him. It sounds strange, but it's true. A woman grows narrow, selfish, thoughtless, unaffectionate, and the consequence is inevitable, the man is susceptible to other influences.

**EXPERIMENT.**—If you place two clocks on the same shelf and adjust their pendulums to swing in exact unison, and set one of them to running, in the course of time the other will start up in sympathy. Each sound impulse caused by the vibration of the pendulum of the clock that is running is communicated to the other pendulum. Each successive impulse adds to the swing of the sympathetic pendulum, which begins in an exceedingly small way.

**O. R.**—Choose one large, red beet, and take until tender, which will take two hours in a slow oven; cut in dice. Slice with it two medium-sized cold boiled potatoes. Make a dressing by beating the yolk of one egg well; add one tablespoonful of salt and half a salt-spoonful each of pepper and mustard; add slowly three tablespoonfuls of salad oil, and one of vinegar, beating well. Beat the white of an egg and add last and pour over the salad. Garnish with parsley.

**AMERICAN GEM.**—The following is very good for removing stains from marble: Take two ounces of common soda, one ounce of pumice-stone, and one of finely-powdered chalk, sift them through a fine sieve and mix with a little water, then rub the mixture well over the marble, then wash it with soap and water. The operation may have to be repeated a few times.

**UNCERTAIN.**—The writing of letters of condolence should be most carefully managed. In the case cited there seems to be no good and sufficient reason why Mrs. B. should write anything whatever to Mrs. A. There is probably only the most formal acquaintance on Mrs. A.'s part and she might not appreciate the attention. Only the closest intimacy warrants such letters, and surely there is nothing to indicate that such intimacy exists.

**QUESTIONS.**—It has come about because of the immense amount of space that may be gained by eliminating such letters as are not absolutely necessary to the full sense. Hundreds of lines in a single volume may be saved, and just so much space is gained which can be utilized for other matter. Profound scholars and students of languages object to this pruning, but the popular feeling seems to be in favour of the cutting down.

**DARK-EYED PAIR.**—For sunburn and tan the following will be found effectual: Take of blanched bitter almonds, half an ounce, soft water half a pint; make an emulsion by beating the almonds and water together, strain through muslin and it is ready. A preparation made of equal parts of olive oil and lime water is also excellent for sunburn. As to the dark blotches you speak of we could not offer anything for them, because we do not know just what they are, the cause, &c. You would do best to have professional advice for that we think.

**SALAD.**—Take four breakfast cupsful of milk, two tablespoonfuls corn flour, half pound of sugar, one tea-spoonful essence of vanilla; beat the milk and add to it the corn flour wet with a little cold milk; let it boil, then stir in the sugar and the vanilla, and set it aside to get quite cold, then freeze it; any other flavour may be added instead of vanilla; lemon or strawberry or a teaspoonful of chocolate may be boiled with the corn flour, and is good for a change; the cream may be made with skim milk, and an egg put in well beaten up after it has boiled; that makes it a little lovely.

**A FRIEND.**—Has your young friend ever tried nursing—not mere attendance upon a person with a sick headache or binding up a cut finger, but trying to calm the shrieking delirium of a fever patient, or washing out and binding disgusting sores, or receiving from the surgeon's hand the severed limb of a patient, or going alone into some dull, dark, isolated dwelling to dress a corpse of some unfriended dead? If she has known nothing of all this, or does not wish to know, she is not fit to be a nurse; if again, her experience has covered some part of what we have described, let her communicate with the matron of the nearest hospital.

**NANCY LEE.**—The terms "starboard" and "larboard" with which almost all persons are familiar were modified by the change from "larboard" to "port," because the two original names were so similar that in storms or times of great excitement they could not be distinguished. As to the origin of the terms there is more or less difference of opinion. It seems that the Italians used the "quarta bords," signifying this side, and "quella bords," meaning that side. For the sake of brevity and ease in speaking, the names became contracted to "sta bords" and "la bords." It took the sailor but a short time to reconvert these words to suit his own purposes, and in due course of evolution they became "starboard" and "larboard," and after many years "starboard" and "port."

**ANXIOUS MOTHER.**—By all means you should correct your child, and that severely and effectively, when it is naughty. It is, however, a very difficult matter for us to tell you just how and what to do. All children differ in temperament, some are amenable to kind words, with others only the rod will have any effect. But it must be set down as a rule that may apply to all children that they should not be corrected for everything they do wrong. Be very patient, take the child and try and impress upon it that what it has done is very wrong, and has displeased you, but talk kindly, firmly, in as simple words as possible; go over it, two or three times, let the child thoroughly understand how much you feel hurt to think it should do so and so, and explain why it is wrong. Never scold, never be harsh, nor strike, however gently.

THE LONDON READER can be sent to any part of the world, post-free Three-halfpence Weekly; or Quarterly, One Shilling and Eightpence. The yearly subscription for the Monthly Part, including Christmas Part, is Eight Shillings and Eightpence, post-free.

ALL BACK NUMBERS, PARTS and VOLUMES are in print, and may be had of any Bookseller.

NOTICE.—Part 447, is Now Ready, price Sixpence, post free, Eightpence. Also Vol. LXXI., bound in cloth, 4s. 6d.

THE INDEX to Vol. LXX. is now Ready; Price One Penny, post-free, Three-halfpence.

ALL LETTERS TO BE ADDRESSED TO THE EDITOR OF THE LONDON READER, 23, Catherine Street, Strand, W.C.

As we cannot undertake to return rejected manuscripts.

## AN INSPIRING STORY.

FRAIL as the human body seems to be, it is a hard thing to kill. Men have lived with iron rods driven through the brain; they have lived with musket balls in various parts of their anatomy; they have been caught up by tornadoes and landed safe miles away; they have passed through almost incredible hardships and privations and come out with lots of vitality left; they have been pronounced dead by doctors and undertakers and emerged from their coffins to work and laugh for many a year afterwards; they have (but not often) been hustled through the terrible Whirlpool Rapids at Niagara, and survived to tell of it; and as for diseases, they will outweather nearly anything named in the medical dictionaries, if they have the ghost of a show. I read of a man who successfully defended his log cabin against a whole band of savages. Only he had the women of his family to load his guns and hand them to him.

That's where it is. Nature will make no end of a plucky fight for life if only she gets a bit of help when she is short-handed and rather too hard pushed. But the help must be of the proper sort and intelligently rendered. And, sorry and sad to say! that is the kind of help so rare in the world, and generally so slow to turn up when we are laying on for all we are worth, with our back against a tree.

For instance, when our good friend, Mr. Francis Craig, had got so weak he couldn't put on his clothes, and so thin you could place an egg in each of the hollows behind his ears, it was high time for some friendly forces to rally to his aid.

"In March, 1879," he says, "whilst living at Ballinacourty, Dungarvan, I began to lose strength. I was weak, weary and dejected, having no life or energy. My appetite was poor, and food gave me no nourishment; but on the other hand tended to irritate my stomach. My breathing was difficult and often I had fairly to fight for my breath. My skin was very sallow, and often the whites of my eyes were yellow, as in jaundice. I was soon exhausted and dreadfully weak; but I kept up as well as I could for a time.

"I expectorated a great deal, straining to bring up the phlegm, which was frequently streaked with blood. I was constantly spitting up a frothy fluid, and a short cough troubled me night and day. Cold, clammy sweats broke over my body, leaving me prostrate. The breathing got worse every month, and at length I could not lie in bed,

but had to be propped up; and for two years I sat up in bed.

"Gradually I wore away to a skeleton, and shrank so much you could have placed an egg in the hollows behind my ears. I was now assisted up and down stairs; and for three years I was unable to dress myself. I took only slight nourishment and liquid food, and gained no strength from it.

"For four years I went on like this, now better, now worse; and many times was so reduced I thought my end had come. I had six doctors attending me, but derived no real benefit from their treatment from first to last.

"In April, 1883, I met a friend who urged me to try Mother Seigel's Syrup. I merely smiled at the suggestion, as I had no faith in its doing me any good. My wife, however, persuaded me to take it, and got a bottle from Messrs. Brennan & Co., Grattan Square. After taking half a bottle I could eat well and my breathing was easier. I continued with it and gained strength every day.

"In a few weeks, to the surprise of all my friends, I was walking about strong and hearty. I was soon strong as ever I was in my life, and have since been well. You can publish this statement, and refer anyone to me."

(Signed) FRANCIS CRAIG,  
Abbey-side, Dungarvan,  
County Waterford,  
Ireland.

September 15th, 1897.

This is an inspiring story; the very thing to cheer and hearten all who have suffered long and much, and are on the verge of giving up the fight. It is nearly enough to make one fancy nobody dies save through ignorance or non-use of this great remedy. While that is, of course, not the fact, we see how tremendous a victory may be won, even close to the churchyard gate, when the exhausted combatant is reinforced by a medicine of such potency as this one. The disease, although it nearly resembles consumption, was of the digestive organs alone. From it arose the asthma and other functional disturbances described. Mr. Craig is a retired officer of Coast Guards, and is now local Hon. Secretary of the National Lifeboat Institution, and he will pardon me for intimating that Mother Seigel's Syrup was virtually a rescuing lifeboat to him in the struggle he was unavailingly making against wind and sea.